

**THE EFFECTS OF INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT ON PREADOLESCENT  
BEHAVIOUR: THE CASE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN DAR ES SALAAM  
AND COAST REGION**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK  
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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by The Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled, **“The Effects of Interparental Conflict on Preadolescent behaviour: The Case of Primary Schools in Dar es Salaam and Coast Region;”** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work (MSW) of the Open University of Tanzania.

.....  
Prof. Hosea Rwegoshora

.....  
Date

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**DECLARATION**

I, **Mbuti Zakayo Kusekwa**, do hereby declare that, the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any University or Institution. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Social Work (MSW).

.....

Signature

.....

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents Reverend Zakayo Kusekwa Mbuti and Mrs. Tezila Kusekwa Mbuti, whose spiritual care, physical provision and encouragement in studies made me pursue post graduate studies at The Open University of Dar es Salaam.

Secondly, this work is dedicated to all the parents who holds the view that marital conflicts can bring destructive consequences to the children therefore they do all they can to solve their problems in a constructive perspective.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study on the effects of interparental conflict to preadolescent behaviour: the case of primary school in Dar es Salaam and Coast regions, examined how preadolescent behaviour is affected by inter parental conflicts. The research had three specific objectives: to identify the emotional and behavioral effects of interparental conflict on children, verification of behavioral changes, and the exploration of ways providing support to children. Three theories guided the research: Attachment Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Emotional Security Theory. This study was conducted in three primary schools in Dar es Salaam and Coast regions. Data was collected using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. A total of 103 respondents, comprising of teachers and pupils, were obtained through convenient and judgment sampling. In-depth interviews were tape recorded. Data was analyzed through content analysis, as a result of which various themes and sub-themes were established and aligned to the three research questions of the study. The findings revealed destructive negative behaviour was prevalent among children from households with inter parental conflicts. The study discovered that when these children enrolled at the Seventh day Adventist schools there was a change of behaviour and emotions because of the great support that they got from the institutions. The conclusion obtained from this study is that parents should make sure that they use constructive methods in solving their problems, rather than resorting to destructive methods which affect the children emotionally and destroy the children's peace and their emotion health.



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ESH	Emotional Security Hypothesis
EST	Emotional Security Theory
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender based violence
KAPS	Kongowe Adventist Primary School
SDAC	Seventh Day Adventist Church
TAEMS	Temeke Adventist English Medium Primary School
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women Association
UNFPA	United Nations Food Program Agency
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
WLAC	Women's Legal Aid Center

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Interparental conflict refers to quarrels, hostilities, opposition or disagreements between couples, usually a husband and wife or wives, within a family (Parke, 2004). Interparental conflicts can be constructive or destructive, depending on whether their impact on children's development is positive or negative (McCoy *et al.*, 2009). Constructive conflicts are conflicts resolved through positive behavioral patterns, in problem solving engagements and verbal exchanges that are accompanied by gestures of physical affection and support. The current research shows that parents with constructive conflict behavioral patterns have children who are sociable, polite, requiring less parental intervention, endowed with well developed coping skills and enhanced problem solving abilities (McCoy *et al.*, 2009).

Destructive conflicts are conflicts which are resolved through negative behavioral patterns which include threats, hostilities, accompanied by anger, verbal abuse and physical aggression, intimidation, and insults displayed by the parents. Available research indicates that parents with destructive conflict resolution stance have children who are anti-social, aggressive, uneasy, full of anxiety, depressed, lacking self control and are at risk of internalizing and externalizing disorders (McCoy *et al.*, 2009).

Marital conflict and divorce research clearly show that the most significant factor that negatively affects children is prolonged exposure to squabbles by parents regardless of family and marital status (Amato, 2010; McCoy, Cummings and

Davies, 2009). Prolonged aggressive non compromising behaviour of parents impairs the child's emotional security and the parent/child relationships and increases the risk of a child acquiring multiple disorders (Bing *et al.*, 2009).

In cases where children are drawn into the parental conflicts the negative consequences are often very dramatic. The frequency of parental conflicts and the manner in which parents handle arguments are crucial to children's adjustments (Cummings and Davies, 2010). For example, McCoy *et al.* (2009) points out situations where children are incorporated into conflict or used directly as targets of conflict; conflict in which the child feels caught in the middle of the dispute and is forced to take a side and conflicts involving any form of abuse.

The effects of interparental conflicts on children can be grouped into three main categories: behavioural and emotional, cognitive functioning and attitudes and long term problems. Behavioural and emotional problems have been identified in children who have witnessed domestic violence. These children have been found to exhibit aggressive antisocial behavioural patterns (sometimes referred to as externalized behavioural conducts); and in certain cases they are filled with fear and related inhibiting behaviours (internalized behaviours) lower social competence than normal children (CBCL, Achenbach and Edelbrock, 1983). Children who witness violence have more anxiety, low self esteem, depression, and anger and temperamental problems than children who have not witnessed violence at home. Children from homes where their mothers have persistently suffered abuse do not understand how others feel when confronted with situations from others' perspectives. Peer relationships, autonomy, self-control, and overall competence are very low among

boys who had experienced serious physical violence and been exposed to the use of weapons between adults living in their homes.

The association between cognitive development problems and academic performance has been investigated for children witnessing domestic violence and compared it with the performance of children from normal families. One such research by Mathias *et al.* (1995) discovered that there were no difference in the academic abilities between children who are witnesses of parental violence and other children. In another study it was found that increased violence exposure was associated with lower cognitive functioning (Rossman, 1998). One of the most direct consequences of witnessing violence may be the attitudes a child develops concerning the use of violence in conflict resolution. Jaffe *et al.* (1986) suggest that children's exposure to adult domestic violence generates attitudes justifying the use of violence in conflict resolution and solving problems. Spaccarelli *et al.* (1995) findings support this association by showing that adolescent boys incarcerated for violent crimes who had been exposed to family violence believed more than others that acting aggressively enhances one's reputation or self-image. Carlson (1991) found that boys who witnessed domestic abuse were significantly more likely to approve of violence than were girls who had also witnessed it.

Several studies from archival records indicate long term problems by adults who in their childhood experienced interparental violence. For instance, Silvern *et al.* (1995) study of 550 undergraduate students found that witnessing violence as a child was associated with adult reports of depression, trauma related symptoms and low self-esteem among women and trauma-related symptoms alone among men. In the same

vein, Henning *et al.* (1996) found that among 123 adult women, who had witnessed domestic violence as children, there was greater distress and lower social adjustment existed when compared to 494 non-witnesses.

Moreover, for children experiencing interparental fights perpetually, home is not a safe haven. Every year, hundreds of millions of children are exposed to domestic violence, and this has a profound impact on their lives and hopes for the future (UN, 2006). These children who not only watch one parent violently assaulting another, often hear the distressing sounds of violence and see blood oozing out of wounds, find life to be a nightmare full of horror.

There is a limited data on the prevalence of domestic violence, and even less information on the number of children who are exposed to such violence. Some countries have no data at all. Many studies indicate that their findings are limited by underreporting of domestic violence. Nevertheless, the estimates are often staggering. In one study it is estimated that there are about 275 millions children worldwide who experience violence in their home (UN, 2006). Table 1.1 provides a snapshot of children exposed to domestic violence worldwide.

In Tanzania there is no data on children who are affected by interparental conflicts; but several studies elsewhere have found that 85-90% of the time, when a violent incident took place in a domestic situation, children were present; and in about 50% of those cases, children were also abused during the violent incident (Queensland Domestic Taskforce, 1998; Cleaver *et al.*, 1999, cited in Fleischer, 2000).

**Table 1.1: Zonal Estimates of the Number of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence**

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence – Range</b>
Developed countries	4.6 to 11.3 million
Commonwealth of Independent States	900,000 to 3.6 million
Northern Africa	No estimate
Sub-Sahara Africa	34.9 to 38.2 million
Latin America and Caribbean	11.3 to 25.5 million
Eastern Asia	19.8 to 61.4 million
Southern Asia	40.7 to 88.0 million
South-Eastern Asia	No estimate
Western Asia	7.2 to 15.9 million
Oceania	548,000 to 657,000

Source: United Nations (2006)

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Children's exposure to interparental intimate partner violence is a serious problem in our society. Persistent exposure of children to such violence adversely affects the growth, cognitive, attitudinal and psychosocial development. The children who live in such an environment have negative attitudes filled with anxiety, depression, aggression, hostility, antisocial behaviour and criminality as well as poor academic

attainment (Harold *et al.*, 2007). Several of those children are enrolled in the Seventh Adventist Church primary schools. It is suggested that the Seventh day Adventist church provides wholistic education that enhances child's well being which in turn affects child's behaviour. The anecdotal evidence suggests that children with bad behavioural characters who enroll in these schools, their maladaptive behaviours change and become better compared to their previous state. However, to date there are no empirical studies to prove the above hypothesis. Therefore, this study is based on the assumption that the behaviour of children from interparental conflict changes and becomes better than when they came to school. The findings obtained from this study proved whether the assumption is true or not.

### **1.3 Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

To find out how the behaviour of children is affected by interparental conflicts.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- (i) To identify emotional and behavioral impacts of interparental conflict on children.
- (ii) To verify the behavioural change of children from interparental conflict homes.
- (iii) To explore the support given to children from interparental conflict homes.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- (i) What are the emotional and behavioural impacts of interparental conflict on children?

- (ii) To which extent have behavioural changes taken place?
- (iii) Is there any support that is provided to children living in interparental conflict homes?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Rothunan *et al.* (2007) point out that many abusive men are concerned about the effect of violence on their children and the children of their partners. They thought that it was possible that some men may be motivated to stop using violence if they understand the devastating effects on their children. The study will sensitize the society on the devastating effects of interparental conflict. The study will contribute to literature on how the interparental conflict can affect the children; it will increase knowledge to the parents and guardians that their conflicts do adversely affects the children. It will benefit those serving at micro level: The social workers, child psychologists, teachers, religious leaders, chaplains, pastors, priests etc. on how to provide interventions to the children affected by interparental conflict. It will help those working at the policy (macro) level to benefit from the findings of this study and then set up and implement policies and laws that are informed by local research.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter begins by presenting related theoretical literature showing what is generally known about interparental conflicts and their effects on children. Then the chapter goes on to present the theoretical framework on which the study is grounded. This is followed by empirical literature review, whereby various researches which have been carried out on the subject were reviewed. It entailed the identification of the old studies on the subject, finding out how that were carried out, their results and determining what was not done.

It was important for the investigator to acquaint himself with the previous studies on the subject before planning for this study. Thus it was possible to familiarize the investigator with the latest developments in the area of study and in the process gaps in knowledge as well as weakness in previous studies were identified. With literature review duplication previous studies was avoided, and findings of previous studies were accessed, including conclusions of past studies (Kruger and Mitchell, 2005).

#### **2.2 Related Theoretical Literature**

Research on the impact of squabbles of couples or interparental conflicts on children has a long history (Emery, 1982; Grych and Fincham 1990; Davies and Cummings, 1994; Harold and Conger, 1997; Cowan and Cowan, 2002). From as far back as the 1930 it has been established that discord between parents has a debilitating effect on children's psychological development (Towle, 1931). Extensive literature search

shows that negative family environments have adverse effects on the psychological adjustment of children (Cummings and Davies, 1994; Grych and Fincham, 2001; Porter and O’Leary, 1980). Incidents of hostility, verbal abuse and anger between spouses affect strongly children behaviour, eliciting, among others, internalizing or externalizing behavioural problems, anger and distress, emotional arousal and increased aggressiveness, anxiety, attachment insecurity and low self-esteem (Cummings *et al.*, 2001; Cummings *et al.*, 1991; Cummings and Davies, 1994; Emery, 1999).

Despite the fact that it has been widely recognized as far as the late 1970s that family discord and breakdown lead to child maladjustment (Hetherington and Cox, 1979), it is only recently that the question of which has the strongest impact on the child’s well being has been raised: Is it divorce or interparental conflict? In the last twenty five years, research has focused particularly on the impact of the interparental conflict on child’s behaviour. Interparental conflict, compared to many other aspects of marital relationship, such as marital satisfaction, familial distress or even marital disruption, seems to have the stronger negative impact on children’s adjustment in several domains including, among others, parent-child relations (Osborne and Fincham, 1996) children’s interpersonal relationships (Hayashi and Strickland, 1998; Long *et al.*, 1987), their mental health (Nelson *et al.*, 1993) and their self concept (Markland and Nelson, 1993).

The existence of a relationship between children’s adjustment and interparental conflict is consistently supported by nearly all recent research findings. The findings suggest that intense, continuous and poorly resolved marital conflict is strongly

associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and poor academic performance in children from such households (Davies *et al.*, Cummings, 2002; Grych and Fincham, 2001).

## **2.3 Factors Influencing the Degree to which Problems Affect Children**

### **Witnessing Interparental Conflict**

The degree to which children are affected by witnessing parents domestic violence is influenced by several factors. The factors interact and create unique outcomes for children.

#### **2.3.1 Abused Children and Children Witnessing Abuse**

Hughes *et al.* (1989) have suggested that both witnessing abuse and also being abused have grave consequences on the character of children. Their study compared children who were both abused and had witnessed violence to children who had only witnessed violence and to others who had been exposed to neither type of violence. They found that children who were both abused and witnessed abuse in their homes exhibited the most serious problem behavioral patterns. The group of children who had only witnessed abuse exhibited moderate behavioural problem symptoms. The last group comprising children, who had neither suffered abuse nor witnessed it, had the most favorable behaviour. Similar results were also found in a series of other researches. However, in one investigation it was found that the experience of being abused or both abused and witnessing abuse is more harmful to children than witnessing adult domestic violence alone (McClosky *et al.*, 1995). Silvern *et al.* (1995) in their study found that after accounting for the effects of being abused, adults report of their childhood witnessing of interparental violence still accounted

for a significant degree of their problems as children. The study goes further and cautions that witnessing domestic violence often results in traumatic effects on children that are completely different from the effects of child abuse.

### **2.3.2 Child Characteristics**

Some studies suggest that the effects associated with witnessing violence on boys and girls differ considerably. Generally, boys exhibit frequent problems that are categorized as external, such as hostility and aggression, while girls generally show evidence of intense internalized problems, such as depression and somatic complaints (Carlson, 1991; Stagg, Wills and Howell, 1989). Certain findings differ from this general trend and show that girls, especially as they get older, also exhibit aggressive behaviour (Spaccarelli *et al.*, 1994). Investigations on children of different age groups suggest that the responses associated with witnessing violence differ according to age. Children in preschools were reported by mothers to exhibit more problems than other age groups (Hughes, 1988). Few studies have found differences based on race and ethnicity. O'Keefe's (1994) study of white, Latino, and African-American families of battered women found that all the children were viewed by their mothers as having serious emotional and behavioral problems. The only difference found between the groups was on social competence; African-American mothers rated their children more competent when compared to other mothers' ratings of their own children.

### **2.3.3 Time Since Violent Event**

The longer the period of time since exposure to a violent event the weaker the effects on a child. For example, Wolfe *et al.* (1986) found more social problems among

children residing in shelters than among children who had at one time in the past been resident in a shelter. The effect of the immediate turmoil may temporarily escalate child problems as observed in a shelter setting.

#### **2.3.4 Parent-child Relationship Factors**

Many researchers have looked at the relationships between young family members to the adults as a key factor. Peled (1996) found that children's relationships with their battering fathers were confusing, with children expressing both affection for their fathers and resentment, pain and disappointment over their violent behaviour. Children's relationships to their mothers have also been identified as a key factor in how children are affected by witnessing domestic violence. Some have conjectured that a mother's mental health would negatively affect a child's experience of violence but the data are conflicting. Wolfe *et al.* (1985) found that maternal stress statistically accounted for a large amount of child behaviour problems. Another study of child witnesses of violence, however, found that mothers' mental health did not affect a child's response to violence in the home (McClosky *et al.*, 1995). Family support and children's perceptions of their parental relationships have also been identified as key parent-child variables. For example, Durant *et al.* (1994) found home environments to be important among the 225 urban black adolescents they studied. Adolescents exposed to community and domestic violence appeared to cope better if they lived in more stable and socially connected households.

#### **2.4 Dimensions of Interparental Conflict**

Not all marital conflict is equal with respect to the impact on children's adjustment. Conflict that is very frequent, intense, and of longer duration tends to be associated

with severe negative child outcomes. None of these factors act in isolation however, significant interdependence is the norm rather than the exception. How each dimension might impact on the child development is likely related to other dimensions of the family in which marital conflict is embedded.

#### **2.4.1 Frequency and Intensity**

Numerous studies have shown a positive association between the frequency of parental arguments and level of maladjustment in children. Frequency has been linked to negative conduct problems, anger and insecurity, and academic difficulties (Cummings and Davies, 1994). Although a majority of the studies in this area rely exclusively on self-report measures, the data are supported by results from studies utilizing laboratory and observational methodologies. Exposure to inter-adult anger under controlled, laboratory-based settings has been linked to increased distress and aggression in children. Parental monitoring of conflict at home also has been found to be associated with behavioural and emotional difficulties in children. In a series of longitudinal studies conducted on household, mothers were taught how to keep a daily diary of conflict events at home. Frequent interparental conflict associated with great distress, insecurity, and anger in children was reported (Cummings and Davies, 1994). Similarly, intensity of arguments was shown to be linked to anger, sadness, concern, and helplessness in children coupled with high levels of behaviour damage (Grych and Fincham, 1993; Kerig, 1996).

#### **2.4.2 Content**

The content or topic of parental disputes is another important domain of marital conflict. Conflict that is child-related has been associated with children's reports of

high levels of shame, self-blame for the conflict, and fear of being drawn in to the conflict (Grych and Fincham, 1993). Parental arguments or disagreements about childrearing policies and strategies have been shown to better predict child difficulties than other dimensions of marital dysfunction, including global marital distress and or nonchild-related fights (Jouriles *et al.*, 1991).

### **2.4.3 Resolution**

In addition to how parents express their anger, the extent to which disagreements are resolved also matters. Resolution is probably best described as residing along a continuum, from no resolution to complete resolution (Cummings and Davies, 1994). Higher degrees of resolution have been shown to be associated with reduced levels of distress in children. In fact, even partially resolved disputes are associated with reductions in children's anger as compared to unresolved fights. Laboratory studies have found children's responses to background anger (from unknown adults) that is followed by a complete resolution are comparable to reactions to entirely friendly interactions (Cummings and Davies, 1994).

## **2.5 Interparental Conflicts and Children Peer Relationships**

Considerable research evidence suggests that peer relationships contribute strongly to children and adolescents' psychological adjustment (Doyle et al., 1994). Research findings have consistently documented that friendships, as well as successful adaptation in the peer group, play an important role in children's social and cognitive development, protect children from the feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction, minimize stress deriving from major changes in children's lives and work as "emotional support" (Dunn, 2004; Parker and Asher, 1993). The family

environment is one of the factors that directly affect the development of children's social competence and their ability to form and maintain satisfying and supportive peer relationships. In contrast to earlier studies, in which emphasis was placed on the parent-child dyad-parents' child rearing techniques and how it is related to the development of social skills in children, recent research has begun to explore the linkage between interparental relationship and children's social competence (Doyle *et al.*, 1994; Kitzmann and Cohen, 2003; Ladd, 1992; Putallaz and Heflin, 1990). Parental relationships and children's peer relationships are both characterized by intimacy and mutuality and observational parental interactions which influence the ways they learn to manage interpersonal dynamics and the strategies they use for interactions in their own relationships (Kitzmann and Cohen, 2003; Meyer *et al.*, 2005; Parke and Ladd, 1992).

## **2.6 Perceptions of Interparental Conflict**

Until recently, children's exposure to conflict was usually accessed through parental reports. However, research evidence suggest that frequency of interparental conflict, as reported by parents or other independent observers, may not be as important for children's adjustment as their own awareness and interpretation of conflict (Grych, Said and Fincham, 1992; Jenkins *et al.*, 1991). For instance, parents are likely to be unaware of the distress children experience due to interparental conflict. It has been reported (Kizmann and Cohen, 2003) that school-aged children, compared to younger ones, exhibit a high degree of regulation of emotions and behaviour. As a result, their parents may not sense easily their distress due to interparental conflict. According to Grych *et al.* (1992), parental reports may not provide accurate



estimates of children awareness of conflict. Children may be aware of conflict to which they are not directly exposed, such as destructive consequences of the ongoing conflict, engendered by overt forms of hostility that often follow unresolved conflicts (Grych *et al.*, 1992). Conclusively, research evidence seems to suggest that children's perception and understanding of conflict provides an insight necessary for understanding its impact on them (Grych and Fincham, 1990).

## **2.7 Gender Differences in the Effects of Interparental Conflict**

Gender differences in children's reactions to marital discord are often reported in relevant reviews of literature (Emery and O'Leary, 1982; Grych and Fincham, 1990, 2001). Empirical evidence suggests that boys, compared to girls, are more sensitive to parental emotionality during marital conflict (Cummings *et al.*, 2004; Cummings *et al.*, 1991) and show greater aggression. Girls, on the other hand, show distress after repeated exposure to anger and hostility between adults (Cummings *et al.*, 1989; Kerig *et al.*, 1993). A study with pre adolescents examined the influence of interparental conflict on preadolescents' aggression with peers and showed that females' rate of aggressive responses decreased as interparental conflict increased, whereas males' rate of aggressive responses increased with increasing interparental conflict (Little *et al.*, 2005). Other studies (eg. Cummings *et al.*, 1994; Grych *et al.*, 2003; Kerig, 1998) have shown that specific aspects of conflict worked as mediators in boys and girls' reactions to conflict and reported gender differences in conflict appraisal and subsequent adjustment. In particular, girls' adjustment was related to self blame, whereas boys appeared to be more sensitive, and consequently more influenced by threat posed by interparental conflict.

It should be mentioned that the threat element of interparental conflict refers to perceived and coping efficacy concerning the experience of conflict. Perceived threat involves children worries about what will happen to themselves or their parents due to instances of interparental conflict, whereas coping efficacy refers to the extent to which children feel able to cope with continual situation.

However, other studies by Katz and Gottman (1993) and Moore and Pepler (1996) did not report gender differences in so far as the effect of interparental conflict on children adjustment is concerned. Davis *et al.* (1998) reported similar patterns of reactions for pre adolescent boys and girls' responses to interparental conflict. More recently, David and Murphy (2004) examined the extent to which individuals exposed to frequent and intense interparental conflict across childhood and adolescence are sensitized to conflict during late adolescence and found only marginal differences between males and females. Consequently, research findings with respect to gender are up to now inconclusive and therefore further investigation is required in this area.

## **2.8 Age differences in the Effects of Interparental Conflict**

In general, children and adolescents' coping strategies and emotional responses to interparental hostility have been shown to change with age and differ qualitatively (Chase-Lansdale *et al.*, 1995; Cummings *et al.*, 1989; Cummings *et al.*, 2004). Nevertheless, research findings provide evidence that frequent, intense and not effectively resolved conflict between parents affect children of all ages. Laboratory studies have indicated relations between exposure to interadult conflict and child aggression. Cummings *et al.* (1985) found that exposure to angry adult interactions

was associated with increased aggression between two year old friends. Attempts to intervene and mediate interparental conflict have been evident to the reactions of children as young as five (Cummings *et al.*, 1989) and nine years old (Cummings, 1987; Cummings *et al.*, 1989). School aged children are likely to blame themselves for the conflict incidents and possible break up of parents (Cummings *et al.*, 2004) and often worry being abandoned when their parents argue (Hodges, 1991). In adolescence, the pressure deriving from the interparental conflict can be even more intense, since it has been observed that adolescents may try to act as providers of support or mediators in conflict incidents between their parents and feel that they are caught in the middle (Buchanan *et al.*, 1991). Davis *et al.* (1998) found a sequential relation between adolescent aggressive functioning and marital conflict.

## **2.9 Interparental Conflict and Minority Background**

Some researcher have found that racial/ethnic minority children who report higher levels of interparental conflict also report higher of levels of depression and greater feeling of hopelessness (DuRant *et al.*, 1995; Formoso *et al.*, 2000). Similarly, some researchers have found that parenting style plays an important role in determining the effect of interparental conflict on minority children (Dumka *et al.*, 1997; Gonzales *et al.*, 2000).

One study that examined the cognitive contextual framework with diverse groups of children suggested that cognitions mediated the link between conflict and depression among minority as well as majority children (Grych *et al.*, 2000). Other researchers however, have found that low-income minority children may be less affected by high levels of interparental conflict than the middle class, white counterparts, perhaps

because of the presence of additional stressors and/or of extended familial support (e.g. Buehler *et al.*, 1997). Thus, it is not yet clear whether interparental conflict affects minority children via the same processes that it impacts majority children or if there may be different factors that are important to consider.

### **2.10 Interparental Conflict and Parental Knowledge**

Marital conflict may undermine parental knowledge because conflict reduces psychological resources for parenting and may lead to withdrawal (Easterbrooks and Emde, 1988; Grych, 2002).

Pre-adolescents whose parents are experiencing high levels of conflict may perceive their parents to be less accessible or less interested. Conflict could also lead to decreased communication between parents (Crouter and Head, 2002; Fincham, 1994). In brief, the documented negative effects of marital conflict on family life are likely to create a context for reduced parental knowledge overtime.

### **2.11 Why Studying Preadolescent (10 – 14 Year Olds)**

There may be the following reasons for studying such a period for children. Firstly, research suggests that interparental conflict increases over the elementary school years, reaching a peak when children are in the middle childhood and early adolescence (Cummings and Davies, 2002). Early adolescence is also a challenging time for parents as they need to adjust to children's increasing desire for independence and need for support around emerging adolescent issues (Cummings *et al.*, 2000). Secondly, this is a relatively understudied period in marital conflict literature; inter middle childhood through early adolescence. It may be particularly

important to consider this epoch both because it represents an important transitional period for parents and their children (Cox and Paley, 1997) and because it may be a period in which marital conflict and parent-child dynamics play particularly salient roles in child well being (Cox and Paley 1997; Easterbrooks and Emde 1988).

## **2.12 Experiences of Interparental Conflict from other Countries**

The researcher found it important to provide readers with experience from other countries so that to compare and broaden the knowledge on the effects of interparental conflict to children. Here the experience is drawn from some countries all over the world in different continents, like America, Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa.

### **2.12.1 The magnitude of the Problem in United States**

Estimates of the number of children who witness domestic violence annually in the United States vary greatly. A Harvard Medical School report (Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2004) cites between three to ten million. When considering how many domestic violence occurrences go unreported, the greater number may be considered more accurate.

It is likely that many years, a vast number of children were negatively affected by these events and most were unattended. But there also is evidence of resilient children-those external supports, internal resources, and adaptive coping mechanisms have counteracted the expected emotional wounds of witnessing parental violence. The strength of these children provide hope that many more can be helped to learn to avoid the anticipated fate of those less strong and hence less fortunate.

### **2.12.2 Children Exposure to Interparental Conflict in Australia**

In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) found that of all women who had experienced partner violence since the age of 15 years and had children in their care during the relationship, 59 percent reported that the violence had been witnessed by children, 37 percent that the violence had not been witnessed by children and four percent that they did not know whether the violence had been witnessed by children in their care (n = 11,800). The Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey found that of women who had experienced partner violence and had children living with them at the time, 36 percent reported that their children had witnessed a domestic violence incident (n = 1,730) (Mouzos and Makkai 2004). Taylor's (2006) analysis of data from the ACT's Family Violence Intervention Program database revealed that for the year 2003–04, children were recorded as being present at 44 percent of domestic violence incidents (n = 2,793).

A Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care study (cited in Flood & Fergus, 2008) found that Indigenous children were significantly more likely to have witnessed physical violence against their mother or stepmother than the 'average' child respondent (i.e. compared with all child respondents). Forty-two percent of indigenous young people reported witnessing violence against their mother or stepmother, compared with 23 percent of all children.

Although estimates vary considerably, research has consistently shown that violent households are significantly more likely to have children than non-violent households (Bedi and Goddard 2007; Fantuzzo et al., 2007; Zerk, Mertin and Proeve, 2009) and that violent households have a significantly higher proportion of children

aged five years and under (Tomison, 2000). Indeed, children are often a factor in women's decisions to stay in violent relationships (Victorian Department of Justice, 2009). Children can be exposed to violence from birth, or even in utero (Bunston 2008), as pregnancy is a time of increased risk of violence for women, with 17 percent of women who experience domestic violence doing so for the first time while pregnant (Morgan and Chadwick, 2009).

### **2.12.3 Children Exposure to Interparental Conflict in Queensland**

In Queensland, 88 per cent (580) of the 856 respondents to the phone-in conducted by the Queensland Domestic Violence Task Force reported the presence of dependent children in the household during the course of the violent relationship. Ninety per cent of these respondents reported that the children had witnessed the domestic violence, and a further 74 per cent of these respondents had spoken with their children about the violence (Queensland Domestic Violence Task Force, 1988). In Western Australia, the Domestic Violence Task Force found that 84 per cent of the 420 respondents to a newspaper survey had children living in the same household as the abusive partner. In a phone-in conducted at the same time, almost 87 per cent of the 297 respondents with children reported that their children had witnessed them being abused (WA Domestic Violence Task Force, 1986).

The figures illustrating a high incidence of child witnesses to domestic violence are reinforced by Walker (1984) who also reported that 87 per cent of children were aware of the violence between adult partners, while Dobash and Dobash (1984) in a study of 314 first, worst and last attacks of violence recalled by victims, found that 58 per cent of the attacks took place in front of the children. Sinclair's research

(1985) based on clinical experience has suggested that if children are in a violent family, 80 per cent of them will witness an episode of wife assault. What they witness may range from a fleeting moment of abusive language to a homicide (Bowker, Arbittel and McFerron 1988).

A review of Victoria's domestic violence legislation between 1987 and 1990 has also shown some alarming results. For instance, during 1989 - 90, of the 3003 violent domestic incidents reported to the police, 92 involved the threat or use of a gun. Sixty-five per cent of these cases were witnessed by children under the age of 5, and 35 per cent were witnessed by children aged between 5 and 9. A further 84 incidents involved the use of a weapon (usually a knife) where 79 per cent were witnessed by children under 5, and 25 per cent were witnessed by children between the ages of 5 and 9. Children under the age of 5 were also present at more than two-thirds of domestic disputes in which property was damaged. Over the three-year-period, an analysis of domestic disputes dealt with by the Magistrate's Court shows that children were assaulted or molested in 25 per cent of domestic disputes; and in 4 per cent of cases children were held in unlawful custody by the perpetrator (Wearing, 1992)

#### **2.12.4 Assessment of Parliamentary Assembly of Europe to Children Witness Of Domestic Violence**

In the last decades the worldwide debate on the domestic violence against women perpetrated by men has slowly started to involve a third subject: children. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in its report 'Children who witness domestic violence', confirms that many of the cases when a mother is



beaten by her partner occur in the presence of her children. As these children emotionally suffer the act of violence against their mother, they might be considered victims too (Ohlson, 2010). However, they often remain invisible to both police and social services. The number of children witnessing domestic violence is statistically underestimated.

Such children are rarely referred to social care workers. Parents usually do not realize the trauma which the observed violence may cause to their children, even if it has not been witnessed directly but heard behind a door. Domestic violence witnessing has been defined by a detailed taxonomy covering ten types of children's exposure to violence (Holden, 2003):

- (i) violence exercised by a man against a pregnant woman (*Perinatal*);
- (ii) the child suffers violence while trying to protect their mother (*Intervention*);
- (iii) the child becomes the object of psychological or physical violence during an assault on the mother (*Victimization*)
- (iv) the child collaborates in the degradation of the mother (*Participation*);
- (v) the child sees the attack on the mother by the father (*Eyewitness*);
- (vi) the child can hear the aggression from another room (*Listening*);
- (vii) the child sees how their mother has been hurt, the place where she has been attacked or sees the police or the ambulance arriving (*Observation of the immediate consequences of the aggression*);
- (viii) the child has to live with the symptoms of the mother, the separation of their parents or the change of residence, for example (*Suffering the consequences*);
- (ix) the child witnesses adult conversations (*Listening to what happened*);
- (x) when it happened away from the children (*Ignorance of the events*).

It is relevant to underline that children may experience a number of these situations at the same time. The Parliamentary Assembly states that ‘witnessing violence against a mother is a form of psychological abuse to a child, with potentially severe consequences’ (Allegra, 2014). This sentence represents a clear answer to those who claim that ‘the father, after all, would never abuse his child’. Battering, humiliating, verbal violence against the mother is affecting the children for their entire life. The worst risk for children witnesses is becoming part of the violence chain, reproducing the violent model (the father role) or the victim one (the mother role).

Children who have experienced such situations may suffer from severe consequences as their feelings and emotions may be as strong as, or stronger than, the reactions and feelings of a physically abused child. Witnessing violence may cause both short and long term psychological, emotional and physical harm to the delicate development of children, affecting areas such as socialization, education and learning. It is essential to recognize that societies are still not ready to treat children witnesses, basically because there is lack of data about the phenomenon.

#### **2.12.5 Investigations of Policies of Children Witness of Domestic Violence in Spain, Italy and Iceland**

In 2010, Save the Children conducted a comparative study ‘Children witnesses of gender violence in the domestic context’ within the European Commission’s Daphne III programme (Czalbowski *et al.*, 2011). The research investigated how policies in Spain, Italy and Iceland fight against gender-based violence (GBV) and take care of children whose mothers have been victims of such violence. The results pointed out that Spain is the best example of GBV law and was viewed as a good model

concerning the EU gender equality strategy. As compared to the Spanish and Italian approach, the Icelandic system seems focused on the recovery of parents, in cases when the situation required the expulsion of the father from the domestic context. Children's needs, however, are not taken into account in this recovery process. Moreover, Icelandic professionals emphasize the difficulty to obtain a non-molestation order by judges which requires evidence and takes a considerable long time to proceed, while the Spanish law can provide urgent measures aimed at protecting the victims.

Italy presents a different case, where the law does not guarantee specific rights to witnesses of violence. It is up to the sensitive interpretation of legal authorities to provide protective measures for children as victims. Concerning the main difficulties the professionals experience in protecting the rights of children who witnessed their mother's abuse, Spain and Italy seem quite similar. Besides the challenges they face in taking care of children in small towns, both countries suffer lack of resources (human and financial) and of specific training for professionals.

In general, results from the interviews show that in all of the three countries there is a lack of coordination amongst different services (police, social services, etc.), which hinders the complete fulfillment of children rights protection. Safe relationships within the home are the most important premise for a healthy development of children. Fighting gender discrimination, disparity between men and women, and gender based domestic violence is fundamental to guarantee to children a balanced growth, free of any kind of violence.

### **2.12.6 Witness Intimate Partner Conflict in Armenia**

Research in Armenia shows that the rate of children who have frequent nightmares is nearly two times higher for children whose mothers experienced partner violence, compared to those children whose mothers did not. Similarly, the percentage of children who are aggressive and who wet their bed often is almost three and 1.5 times higher, respectively, among children who were exposed to intimate partner violence against their mothers compared to those who were not (UNFPA, 2010). Furthermore, it is well-established that exposure to intimate partner violence against the mother increases the risk of boys perpetrating and girls experience intimate partner violence later in life.

### **2.12.7 Consequences of Intimate Partner Conflict on Children – A Lesson from Serbia**

The Autonomous Women's Center (2013) conducted a qualitative study among 170 women from 12 towns/municipalities in Serbia, to assess the impact of intimate partner violence on children. The sample included women survivors of intimate partner violence who are mothers of at least one minor child and have addressed women's organizations for support. The study revealed, among others:

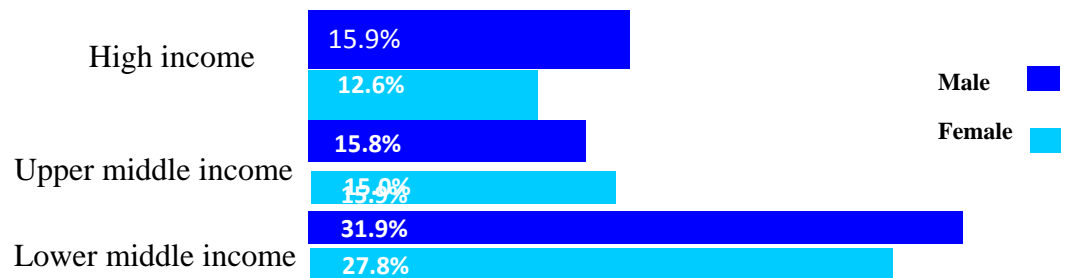
- (i) In more than two thirds of the cases, the children witnessed violence committed by their father against their mother; in almost half of the cases, children experienced violence themselves.
- (ii) In more than 40% of the cases, children tried to protect the mother from violence or prevent the father from acting violent, which put them at major risk of harm.

- (iii) Mothers report the existence of physical injuries to children, sleep disturbances and loss of appetite (in every fourth case, respectively), as well as night urination in every fifth case.
- (iv) The following changes in behaviour were reported: children being quiet and withdrawn (50%), restless, disobedient or irritable and prone to shouting (every third case), or showing physical and verbal aggression (every fourth child).
- (v) Most commonly reported reactions of children to their violent fathers included fear, avoidance of any contact or unconditional obedience. It was observed that obedience decreased over time, as a result of age and increasing independence. In some cases, however, children insisted on contacts with the father, due to authentic emotions for him but also as a result of manipulative behaviors on the part of the perpetrator.

#### **2.12.8 Witnessing Domestic Violence in East Asia**

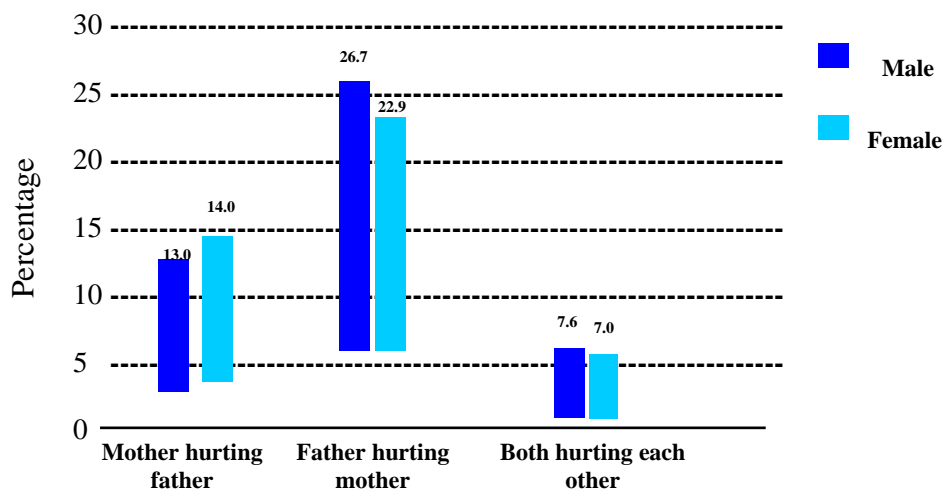
The countries in this region comprises of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Vietnam and West Malaysia. These countries encompass a patriarchal family system, with cases of violence against women and children often remaining unreported due to inadequacy of resources and societal stigmata. An increasing number of studies in the region are exploring the prevalence of children witnessing parental domestic violence. Prevalence estimates for boys and girls are very similar with 12-32% reporting to have witnessed parental violence at some point in their childhood (UNICEF, 2014). Some studies only measure father to mother violence and others measure violence from both parents separately, while still other studies do not specify which parent may be perpetrating the violence.

In addition, only a few studies include measures of severity including injury or harm resulting from the violence or length of time witnessing the violence.



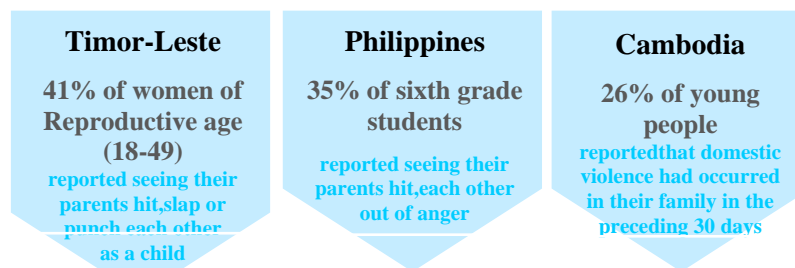
**Figure 2.1: Prevalence of Witnessing Domestic Violence in Countries in the East Asia by World Bank Classification and Gender, Based on 17 studies**

Source: Fang et al., (2014)



**Figure 2.2: Percentage of Filipino 17-19 years Olds who Reported Recalling Parental Domestic Violence by Gender (n = 2,051)**

Source: Hindin and Gultiano, 2006



**Figure 2.3: Findings on Witnessing Parental Violence, Timor-Leste, the Philippines and Cambodia**

Source: Timor-Leste: IRC, 2003; Philippines: Maxwell, 2001; Cambodia: The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, UNICEF and UNESCO, (2004)

### **2.12.9 South Asia and Interparental Violence**

Historical evidence of the last few decades reveals that domestic violence had grown in a diversified manner among different societies and socioeconomic groups. Children who get exposed to the inter-parental violence are on greater risk of getting (psychologically) victimized by the act of violence. South Asia, with 23% of the world's population and widespread poverty, also faces a high rate of exposure to domestic violence among children. South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan encompass a patriarchal family system, with cases of violence against women and children often remaining unreported due to inadequacy of resources and societal stigmata. These factors make it hard to determine accurately the number of children exposed to violence (Hyder, 2007). Domestic violence adversely affects individuals, families, and the society.

### **2.12.10 Interparental Conflict in Egypt**

Egypt is the most populous country in the Arabic region with 82.5 million inhabitants of which 25% are adolescents (UNICEF, 2011). Traditionally, adolescents in Egypt live with their parents and some may regularly witness inter-parental conflict (Tam and Lim, 2008). Conflict is defined as any disagreement, difference and argument about an issue that rises in family life (Cummings, 2002; Power, 2011). Worldwide, around 133 to 275 million children and adolescents witness violence in the home annually. In Egypt there are no statistics on the rate of inter-parental conflict but one info-graphic study conducted by Al-Jazeera found that 47% of married, divorced, widowed women experienced domestic violence (Chughtai and O'Toole, 2015).

### **2.12.11 Secondary Victimization of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence in South Africa**

It appears that in South Africa the focus as far as domestic violence is concerned, is more on the parties who are recognized as the direct victims of the abuse than the indirect victims. According to Divya (Singh, 2005) children who are not directly assaulted but who ‘merely’ witness the acts of domestic abuse between adults in the home often remain the hidden victims of the abusive encounter.

The reality is that a woman who lives with a child in the household and such child witnesses the abuse this child may suffer and endure harm merely from witnessing such an abuse that may be performed often by their father or a person who the mother is in an intimate relationship with. This situation violates section 28 (1) (b) and 28 (1) (d) of the Constitution which provides for the protection of children’s rights (South Africa Constitution). However, government response is always quick to speak out and condemn the violence, yet it seems unable to prevent the scourge of domestic violence. There is a need to create a safe environment for women and children in South Africa.

Therefore, little is known about the impact of trauma on secondary victimized children exposed to interparental violence. It is therefore, necessary to investigate and to learn more about the symptoms and distress experienced by children exposed to inter-parental violence. Research regarding this matter is necessary to aid the development and availability of more tools to relieve child witnesses’ distress, and to allow them to re-enter the pathways of normal development (Rossman and Ho, 2000). A child’s exposure to women abuse is the leading risk factor and predictor for



men abusing women in later life (Sundermann, Marshall and Loosely, 2000). Interventions should be adjusted and designed to ameliorate this risk and impact of inter-parental violence on child witnesses while they are still young. If these aspects are not addressed, these children are more likely to become abused or abusers themselves when they are adults (Sundermann *et al.*, 2000). Prevention of this cycle of violence in future generation should therefore be priority, especially in South Africa (Senecal, 2002; Sundermann *et al.*, 2000).

Various psychosocial problems which are associated with and contribute to violence are prevalent in South Africa. A statistical estimate, (based on police statistics, victim surveys and estimates by various Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working with survivors of violence of the prevalence of domestic violence showed that between one in four, and one in every six women in South Africa were in an abusive relationship during 1999 (Bollen *et al.*, 1999). One woman is killed by her partner every six days and on average 80% of rural women are victims of domestic violence in South Africa (Mathew *et al.*, 2008). These statistics urge prevention and intervention strategies not only targeting the needs of primary victims (women and mothers) but also secondary victims (children exposed to domestic violence) in South Africa.

#### **2.12.12 Effects of Interparental Conflict in Tanzania**

Children who witness conflict between parents by their names have been labeled the “silent”, “forgotten”, “unintended” victims of adult to adult domestic violence (Grovel *et al.*, 1993). Tanzania likewise, experience couples conflicts that affect children directly or indirectly. For instance about 275 cases of serious marital

conflicts have been reported every three months in Dar es Salaam alone (Natihaika, 2000). In 1993 alone, the number of marital conflict cases handled in primary courts of Dar es Salaam were 42 (Manzese), 125 (Ilala) and 300 (Temeke). Between 1989 and 1993 about 338 cases of parental conflict were registered at the primary court in Songea-Urban (Mhagama, 1994) and Natihaika (2000) revealed that there has been an increase in numbers of people seeking aids because of marital discord. Extensive researches conducted in Tanzania by civil organizations such as the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) on marital conflicts reports a number of marital cases reported and that Magomeni primary court received 118 matrimonial cases in 1997 and the number has risen to 422 cases by 1999 (TAMWA, 1999, 2006, 2009). The Women's Legal Aid Center (WLAC) annual report (2006) shows that there were a total of 14,790 matrimonial cases out of which were 3,510 cases were domestic violence, land disputes and interference.

The nature of these conflicts were reported all over the country including: Songea (974 cases), Morogoro (118 cases), Arusha (102 cases), Tanga (76 cases), Iringa (68 cases), Shinyanga (42 cases), Kiteto (18 cases), Moshi (12 cases) and Mwanza (2 cases). According to this organization, there is a big problem of women not reporting their marriage woes to the relevant authority for various reasons: women are worried about being divorced, but they do not know their rights, this implies that parental conflicts are increasing in numbers at a unnoticeable rate due to some cases are not reported thus, the number may be higher than in various reports (TAMWA, 2006).

Previous studies have revealed that currently family life in Tanzania has changed dramatically at an alarming rate and that family conflicts rate has skyrocketed and

women have surged into workplace (Materu, 2009; Kania, 2009; TAMWA, 2006). As the result, family life in Tanzania has become more diverse than it was used to be a generation ago. These changes in the family have not affected not only the form of the family life but also the psychological wellbeing of the children. This is contrary to the families of traditional society whereby parental conflicts were considered as the shame and failure of marital relationship (Basela, 2008). As the consequence, currently in Tanzania, many children have resorted to live in the streets and children's centers following frequent and persistence of parents' quarrels.

According to Materu (2009), children have been forced to live in the streets due to marital conflicts and about 50% of street children who were interviewed complain that they were forced to live in the streets due to their parents' frequent quarrels. Scholars have denoted the effects of such conflicts to children in their daily life while living with quarreled parents, the children lack of parental protection, care, love as well as denial of educational rights (Cheng, 2010; Arfaie *et al.*, 2013). Quarreled-parents fail to pay school fees, and necessary school materials. All these have resulted to drop out and children engagement in delinquent behaviours, such as smoking marijuana, teenage sexual practices, robbery (Howard, 1995). Children from homes with marital conflicts are likely to develop a numbers of antisocial behaviours.

### **2.13 Related Theoretical Framework**

The study on the impact of interparental conflict to preadolescent behaviour is guided by the following theories: Attachment, Emotion Security Theory, and Social Learning Theory.

### **2.13.1 Attachment Theory**

Attachment theory was originally developed as an evolutionary analysis of the emotional bonds that connect infants and their caregivers (typically parents) and the adverse consequences for the infant when these bonds are frayed or broken (Bowlby, 1982). For complex biological reasons (including the size of the infant's skull required to house the large human brain and the narrowness of the birth canal required for the mother's bipedal skeletal structure), human babies are born extremely immature relative to other animals and cannot survive without receiving long term care to keep them safe and healthy (Abitbol, 1993).

According to attachment theory, human infants and caregivers possess, as a result of evolutionary pressures, complementary affective and behavioural systems that increase the likelihood that the infant will receive sufficient care to survive. For example, infants cry when they feel anxious, causing their caregivers to experience distress and a desire to soothe them; those ancestral parents who lacked this desire, the theory suggests, tended to have children who did not survive long enough to reproduce, and consequently their genes were weeded out of the evolutionary pool over time.

At its most basic level, then, attachment is a deep-rooted emotional bond that keeps the infant and the caregiver in close proximity, a process that decreases the likelihood that harm will befall the infant. The attachment-based motivation to seek proximity is especially strong under stressful or threatening circumstances which can include not only safety concerns but also threats to the attachment bond itself, such as caregiver unavailability (Mikulincer, 2003).

According to attachment theory, the emotional attachment linking infants to their primary caregiver rises to the level of a basic need comparable in many ways to hunger or thirst (Baumerister, 1995). When the caregiver is responsive to their needs, infants feel calm and safe, concluding that they are lovable and that their caregiver is dependable. In contrast, when the caregiver is unresponsive (or when circumstances, such as prolonged separation, threaten the attachment bond), infants feel anxious and insecure. This anxiety and insecurity can quickly turn to anger and protest behaviours if the caregiver remains unresponsive or unavailable.

Even when they are reunited with their primary caregiver, infants who have experienced prolonged attachment disruptions (separations or periods of unresponsive caregiving) frequently remain angry for a while. They express both a disire for intimacy and a tendency to communicate their anger, "arching away angrily while simultaneously seeking contact (Dutton, 1998).

As a result of their early attachment experiences, infants draw idiosyncratic conclusions about the degree to which (1) they are worthy of affection and (2) others are reliably responsive (Bowlby, 1973). According to early empirical research, infants develop one of three unique "attachment styles," which refer to the ways in which they relate emotionally and behaviourally to their primary caregiver (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978).

Infants categorized as "secure" feel confident to explore new surroundings when their primary caregiver is present, become distressed or even angry when she (or he ) leaves them alone, and are quickly comforted by an affectionate reunion when she returns. Infants categorized as "avoidant" tend not to pursue physical contact with

their primary caregiver, do not exhibit overt signs of distress when she leaves them alone, and do not approach her when she returns.

Finally, infants categorized as "anxious-ambivalent" tend to cling anxiously to their primary caregiver, become almost inconsolably distressed or angry when she leaves them alone, and both solicit and reject care (e.g., by wanting to be picked up but then immediately pushing away) when she returns. Although attachment theorists recognize that these attachment styles are not entirely stable over time, (Davila *et al.*, 1999) they argue that the styles exhibit reasonably high stability because the lessons infants learn about how lovable they are and how responsive caregivers are become internalized and entrenched beliefs that influence how they interact with the social world in the future (Hazan, 1987).

Although the secure pattern is the healthiest of the three attachment styles, Professor Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues argued that all three styles are adaptive responses to a specific type of parenting. Secure infants tended to have a primary caregiver who was reliably responsive to their needs, which caused them to learn that their distressed pleas for comfort would be met.

Avoidant infants tended to have a primary caregiver who was reliably unresponsive, which caused them to learn that their pleas would be neglected and that making such pleas was fruitless. Anxious-ambivalent infants tended to have a primary caregiver who was unreliably responsive, which caused them to learn that their pleas would sometimes be met and sometimes be neglected. Given this parental behaviour, it is adaptive for avoidant infants not to depend too much on their caregiver and for anxious ambivalent infants to express as much distress as possible to make the

caregiver realize that the current need for comfort is especially acute, thereby maximizing the likelihood that the caregiver will respond sensitively.

### **2.12.2 Attachment in Middle Childhood**

Middle childhood represents a vital development time frame during the shift from childhood to adolescence, yet it is a relatively understudied age group in the field of attachment research (Moss *et al.*, 2006). During this important developmental period, children are making a transition from being solely dependent on parents for emotional security and support to developing a greater reliance on peers and social relationships. Despite broadening of the social network during middle childhood, children of this age continue to use parents as primary figures and show a strong preference for parents over peers when the child is scared or sad (Kerns, Tomich and Kim, 2006). Indeed, the scarce literature on attachment in the middle childhood indicates that parent-child attachment is related to adaptation within both home and peer settings (Kerns *et al.*, 2000; Moss and St-Laurent, 2001). A “secure base” with parents appears to contribute to children’s ability to seek relationships outside of the home with expectations that others would be available to meet their needs.

### **2.12.3 Child Security and Psychological Functioning**

Theoretically, secure children are able to maintain and carry forward feelings of being worthy of love and support from others. Research indicates that securely attached children have a more balanced self-view, a high self-esteem, and lower levels of internalizing and externalizing problems in middle childhood (Cassidy *et al.*, 2003). Research also indicates that children with secure attachment histories seem to develop a foundation of empathy from the caregiver-child relationship that

helps them be attuned and emphatic to others' emotions in social relationship (Weinfield *et al.*, 2008). In contrast, insecure attachment representations are associated with the unique set of adjustment difficulties and behaviour problems in children. Children with a preoccupied attachment experience difficulty regulating their emotions, rely on others for soothing and comfort, and consequently more often exhibit depression, anxiety, and aggression (Weinfield *et al.*, 2008). In addition, children using preoccupied attachment strategies demonstrate deficits in social skills when compared to secure or avoidant children in middle childhood (Verschueren and Marcoen, 1999).

Avoidant attachment strategies in middle childhood have been associated with poor social, emotional, and scholastic adjustment as well as peer rejection and internalizing and externalizing symptoms (Granot and Mayseless, 2001). Disorganized attachment strategies have been associated with internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems in middle childhood (Moss and St-Laurent, 2001). In addition to child attachment insecurity in the parent-child relationship, the child's sense of emotional insecurity regarding the interparental relationship has been identified as a significant risk factor for child psychopathology (Cummings *et al.*, 2006). More specifically, children's concurrent emotional insecurity in the interparental relationship and parent-child attachment insecurity were associated with internalizing (e.g. depression and anxiety) and externalizing (e.g. aggression, delinquency) symptoms in adolescents (Davies *et al.*, 2002).

The exacerbation of risk in coercive family environments is facilitated by unresolved conflict and discord, insufficient child monitoring, and lack of close relationship with



one or both parents (Rutter, 2000). A resounding theme in the risk and resilience literature emphasizes the importance of positive early family relationships as a protective factor against vulnerability to negative outcomes. In fact, quality parenting is the single most robust protective factor for children exposed to adversities and positive family relationships can promote resilience in children facing difficult circumstances (Luthar and Zelazo, 2003). Therefore, if early attachments are insecure, children tend to expect negative reactions from others and eventually may behave in ways that elicit these reactions, which perpetuates a cycle of rejection by others and/or feelings of anxiety regarding abandonment; however, children with at least one secure attachment come to expect and can expect nurturing from others (Sroufe, 2002).

#### **2.12.4 Interparental Conflict**

Some conflict between parents is a normative occurrence in most of today's families. However, depending on the severity and frequency, interparental conflict may present a significant risk to children's mental health and well being (Davies and Woitach, 2008). Studies suggest that middle childhood is a time when interparental conflict and discord reach to their peak, which underscores the importance of investigating family processes during this time (Cummings and Davies, 1994).

Some children internalizing blame for the conflict between parents, especially if they hear parents argue about the issues pertaining to childcare or discipline. Older children, more than younger children, tend to have a better understanding of the meaning behind parental conflict and can often interpret conflict to mean that something is interfering with the family dynamic (Cicchetti *et al.*, 1990).

Interparental conflict has been related to maladjustment and behaviour problems in children aged five to eighteen, indicating that it is a major concern when considering important developmental processes that occur throughout childhood and adolescence (Cummings and Davies, 2002; Fincham *et al.*, 2001).

Exposure to interparental conflict has been associated with both internalizing and externalizing symptoms in children. Studies indicate that children may experience symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and aggressiveness as a result of witnessing interparental conflict (Sturge-Apple *et al.*, 2006). Since interparental conflict is related to a child's sense of emotional security in the home, children may respond emotionally and behaviorally to the stress of conflict between parents. When a child's emotional needs are not being met in the parent-child relationship, this can contribute to a sense of insecurity regarding one or both parents' ability to provide a safe haven (Frosch *et al.*, 2000). Children's perception of threat directly shapes their reaction to the conflict, which often takes the form of internalizing symptoms and behaviours (Grych *et al.*, 2000). However, if children blame themselves for the conflict between parents, they are more likely to experience both internalizing and externalizing problems (Fosco and Grych, 2007).

#### **2.12.5 Links Between Interparental Conflict, Attachment and Child Outcomes**

The emotional security hypothesis states that within the highly emotional context of interparental conflict, a priority for children is to find ways to maintain protection, safety, and security. Since the parent-child relationship often provides children with safety and security in times of uncertainty, children are increasingly vulnerable to psychological distress when they feel unable to preserve a sense of security during

parental conflict. When parents fight, they not only undermine a child's sense of stability in the home environment but frequently they are also not emotionally available to protect the child because they are preoccupied with defending themselves (Sturge-Apple *et al.*, 2006). Similar to attachment theory, ESH supports the idea that a child's sense of security in the parent-child relationship may be jeopardized by interparental conflict (Davies and Woitach, 2008).

A vital component of the current research on the interparental conflict is to identify key processes that account for a child's vulnerability to the damaging effects of conflict and behavioural problems. Davies and Cummings (2006) propose a mediation model stating that part of the association between interparental conflict and child maladjustment can be explained by parent-child relationship features, including attachment. Attachment may be related to children's perceptions of threat from conflict because one of the main fears arising from interparental conflict is that the family will break up and the child may lose their attachment relationship to one or both parents (Cummings and Davies, 1996). In fact, some children who report high levels of interparental conflict also report attachment insecurity in the parent-child relationship (Harold *et al.*, 2004). Conflict between parents can undermine a child's sense of security in the family environment, but attachment security in the parent-child relationship seems to protect children from experiencing the deleterious effects of the conflict.

Few studies have investigated the role that attachment plays in the association between interparental conflict and child adjustment problems in the middle childhood. El-Sheikh and Elmore-Staton (2004) found that secure attachment to

mothers functioned as a protective factor against internalizing symptoms associated with interparental conflict, whereas a secure attachment to fathers served as a protective factor against child-reported externalizing symptoms associated with interparental conflict. In another recent study on middle childhood, El-Sheikh et al. (2008) report that children's emotional security in the parent-child relationship mediated the association between marital aggression and children's internalizing and externalizing symptoms in a community sample families. This study provides further evidence for the associations between marital conflict, emotional security, and child behavioral outcomes.

### **2.13 Social Learning Theory**

The first conceptual model that was systematically applied to studying the effects of conflict on children was social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), which proposes that children who witness their parents engaging in hostile or aggressive behaviour learn to be aggressive through modeling and vicarious reinforcement. This type of learning does not simply involve children acquiring and repeating specific behaviours that they observe, but rather the development of knowledge and beliefs about what behaviour is appropriate or effective in a particular context.

According to this perspective, children exposed to the elevated levels of conflict and aggression may come to view aggression as a normative or justifiable way to resolve conflict, express anger, or exert control over another person, particularly if it is seen as effective. These beliefs in turn make it more likely that youths will engage in aggression when they are in similar situations, such as conflicts with peers or dating partners.

In addition, the failure to model more constructive strategies for managing conflict and anger may result in children developing a repertoire of behaviours dominated by aggressive behaviour. The correlations reported between parent and child aggression are consistent with a modeling hypothesis, but they do not provide direct or specific evidence that modeling is the mechanism driving children's behaviour as we discuss below, other conceptual approaches offer alternative explanations for why children from highly conflictual homes would be more aggressive toward others. Several studies have tested a more specific modeling hypothesis, that children are more likely to imitate the conflict behaviour of the same sex parent, but they have produced inconsistent findings.

For example whereas Crockenberg and Forgays (1996) found that boys aggression was more closely related to their fathers conflict behaviour than their mothers, with the opposite pattern holding for girls, Crockenberg and Langrock (2001) reported no differences in the strength of the associations between children's aggression and their same and opposite sex parent.

The question of whether aggressive conflict behaviour is perceived to be more effective by children from high conflict homes has not been examined directly, but there is substantial evidence that youths exposed to the higher levels of interparental discord view aggression in close relationships as more acceptable. Beliefs about the justifiability of aggression in turn have been found to mediate the association between interparental aggression and aggression towards peers (e.g., Marcus *et al.*, 2001) and dating partners, especially for boys (Foshee *et al.*, 2001; Kinsfogel and Grych, 2004).

Social Learning theory offers an explanation of why children exposed to higher levels of interparental conflict become very aggressive. The available empirical evidence shows that children from highly discordant families are more likely to view aggressive behaviour as more acceptable and to engage in more aggressive behaviour toward others. However, observational investigation does not account for elevated levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms seen in these children, and does not address one of the most salient aspects of witnessing conflict: The level of distress it causes to children.

#### **2.14 Emotion Security Theory**

Another theory that guided this study was the Emotion Security Theory (EST). Consistent with high social importance attached to understanding the nature of risks faced by children from high conflict homes, The emotional security theory was developed by Davies and Cummings (1994) to explain how, when, why households are plagued with interparental conflicts. What are the individual differences that foster discord? Interparental conflicts create alien conditions in the realm of children's mental health. At the heart of our theory is the premise that interparental conflict poses a risk to children's adjustment by directly undermining their emotional security in the interparental relationship and compromising parent-child attachment processes through its association with parenting disturbances.

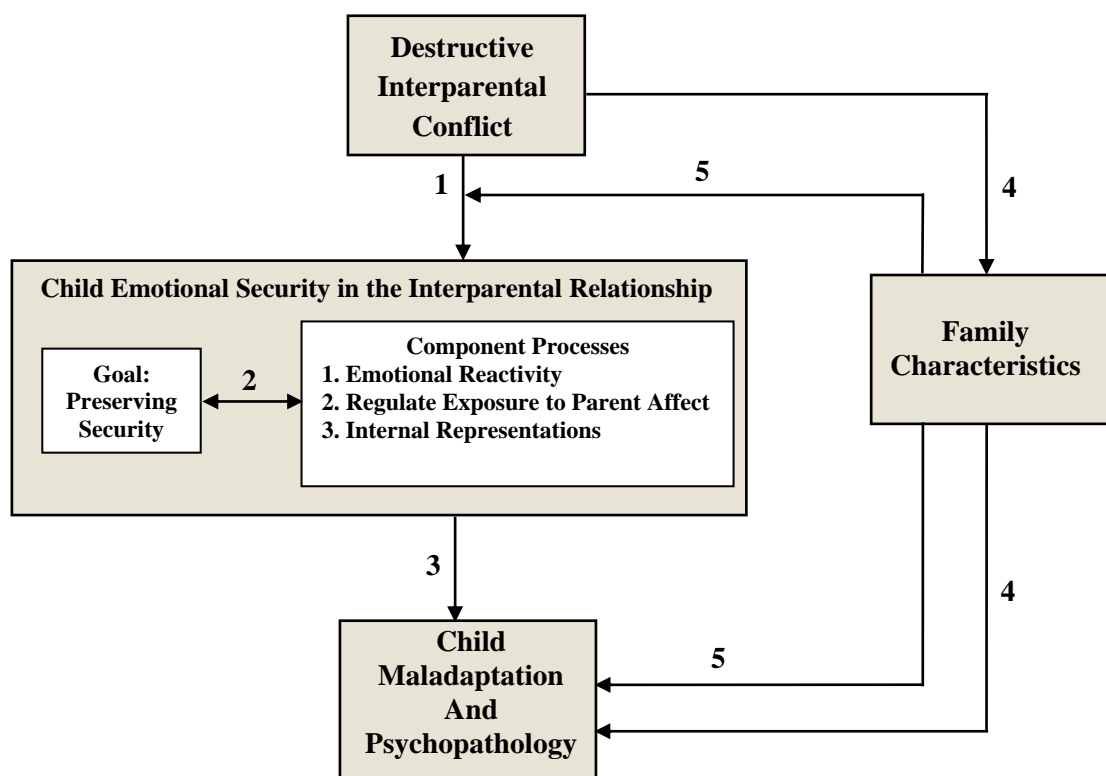
Extant research concluded that there were two primary outcomes underlying the risk posed by the interparental conflict. The first is called the direct path model, which proposes that interparental conflict increases children vulnerability to adjustment problems by progressively amplifying their distress and reactivity to subsequent

adult conflicts. The second is called the indirect path model, which stipulates that parenting practices and child-parent relations mediate the link between interparental conflict and child psychological maladjustment. The EST is rooted in the functionalist perspective, and emotion regulation is understood relationally within the context of goals and the dynamic relation between the person and environment (Campos *et al.*, 1994; Thompson, 1997). In the same vein, identification of goals and causes relevant to emotion is the main undertaking in any theoretical explanation of the functionalist perspective.

Attachment theory, with its focus on emotional security, in association with a parent-child interaction, served as a guide in studying interparental relationship and the broader family system (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978; Bowlby, 1969; Sroufe and Waters, 1977). Thus, correspondence between the emotion security and attachment theories lies in the assumption that the quality of the parent-child relationship can affect children's adaptive functioning by enhancing or undermining children's security in the parent-child subsystem. However, unlike the attachment theory, the EST emphasizes that preserving security is relevant beyond the context of the parent-child relationship.

More specifically, consistent with the examination of children coping in the broader family unit in family systems theory (Davies, Cummings and Winter, 2004), the EST posits that preserving emotion security is an important goal that organizes children's emotional experiences (e.g. fear), action tendencies (e.g. withdrawal, involvement), and appraisals of the self and others (e.g. perceptions of threat to well being) across multiple family relationship, including interparental subsystem.

The emotion security theory postulates that within the hierarchy of human goals; protection, safety, and security are among the most salient and important (Davies *et al.*, 2002). Thus, one implication is that a child's sense of security in the interparental relationship is a prominent process that is relatively distinct in its origins, organization, and sequel from security within the parent-child relationship.



**Figure 2.4: A Family-wide model of the Effect of Interparental Conflict on Child Emotional Security and Psychopathology**

Building on the assumption that children develop their own distinct sense of security in the interparental relationship, the direct path component of the EST proposes that children's security in the interparental relationship is a central mediating mechanism underlying the direct risk posed by interparental conflict for children. As illustrated in path 1 of Figure 2.4 above, repeated exposure to heightened hostility, distress, and disengagement between parents is specifically theorized to increase children's



concerns about their security over time as they grapple with worries about the welfare of their parents, proliferation of parental discord into parent-child subsystem, and the implications for family instability and dissolution. Reflecting the distinct nature of the organization of security in the interparental relationship, preserving security in the interparental relationship is conceptualized as a latent goal that regulates and is regulated by three observable classes of response: emotional reactivity, regulation of conflict exposure, and internal representations.

Thus as shown in path 2 of Figure 2.4, threats to the goal of security in the interparental relationship are posited to trigger greater emotional reactivity, characterized by prolonged, regulated fear and distress in the context of interparental discord; regulation of conflict exposure in the form of avoidance of involvement in interparental problems; and hostile internal representations of the consequences interparental difficulties have for the welfare of the self and family (Davies and Cummings, 1994, 1998). Illustrating the bidirectional interplay between the goal and response processes, these processes are posited to serve the evolutionarily adaptive function of facilitating the attainment of safety in the average expectable environment. For example, heightened states of vigilance and arousal that characterize emotional reactivity are theorized to increase children's sensitivity to signs of impending threat in the family unit and energize them to quickly cope with stress and preserve their well-being. Although elevated concerns about security for children from high-conflict homes may hold adaptational value in the immediate context of the family, the EST further postulates that these concerns are maladaptive for children's long-term functioning.

Thus, path 3 in Figure 2.4 illustrates second link of the mediational pathway and its assumption that vigilance, distress, worry, and negative appraisals triggered by exposure to interparental difficulties lay foundation for broader patterns of internalizing and externalizing symptoms. In the second part of the mediational chain, response processes linked with the emotional security system are hypothesized to increase child vulnerability to psychological symptoms.

Supporting this hypothesis, research indicates that security in the interparental relationship partially mediates the link between interparental conflict and young adolescent internalizing and externalizing symptoms even after taking into account social-cognitive appraisals of threat and self-blame and parent-child attachment security (Davies *et al.*, 2002). Despite the empirical support for the direct path hypothesis of EST, the modest to moderate magnitude of mediational role of security in the interparental relationship highlights the considerable variability of coping and adaptation processes experienced by children exposed to similar family circumstances. Thus, the findings also reflect diversity and plurality in pathways between interparental conflict and psychopathology across children.

According to the family systems component of EST, as shown by path 4 in Figure 2.4, the indirect path component of EST demonstrate that the link between interparental conflict and child psychopathology is at least partially mediated by family disturbances, including parenting difficulties characterized by emotional unavailability and psychological control (eg., Fauber *et al.*, 1990; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2000; Harold *et al.*, 1997). In furthering a family-wide model of emotional security, the indirect path component of the theory specifically posits that the joint influence

of destructive interparental conflict and poor parenting practices increases child vulnerability to maladaptation by undermining security across both parent-child and interparental relationships. Given that protection is a primary function of the attachment relationship, variations in the quality of attachment patterns are assumed to reflect individual differences in the ability of children to use the caregiver as a haven of protection and safety (Cicchetti *et al.*, 1990; Kobak, 1999). However, at least until recently, the substantive scope of attachment theory has been largely confined to identifying specific (e.g. responsiveness) and child (e.g., temperament) attributes in isolation from the broader family system (Thompson, 1997).

In extending the literature on parent-child relations, the indirect hypothesis of EST contends that parenting difficulties accompanying interparental conflict are related to child adjustment problems through their association with child-parent attachment security. Consistent with this prediction, research utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM) has indicated that the mediational role of parenting difficulties in associations between interparental conflict and early adolescent psychological symptoms is further mediated by children's insecurities about the accessibility of their parents as support figures (Davies *et al.*, 2002). Secondly, the family-wide model of EST postulates that family characteristics also serve as potentiating or protective factors that alter the magnitude of mediational pathways among parental conflict, child security, and child adjustment.

Path 5 in Figure 2.4 illustrates the hypothesis that interparental conflict may have different implications for children concerns about security following repeated exposure to interparental conflict are specifically proposed to be amplified in family

units that are exhibiting other signs of significant vulnerability (e.g. family discord, parental psychopathology).

Conversely, interparental conflict is hypothesized to take on a different, more benign meaning in the context of significant psychosocial strengths and resources in the family unit (e.g. cohesion, social support). Despite empirical support for the EST, the theory was initially developed to account for patterns of relationships among interparental discord, children's reactions to interparental interactions, and children psychological adjustment in relatively well-functioning samples of families.

Moreover, subsequent empirical tests of the main hypothesis derived from the emotional security theory have been largely, if not exclusively, confined to families who do not experience significant risk or psychopathology. However, the viability of the EST for understanding mental health and illness hinges on advancing additional efforts to translate and apply the emotional security theory to families and children who experience significant adversity.

In order to understand development from the psychopathology perspective both normal and abnormal functioning have to be considered (Cicchetti, 1993; Cummings, Davies and Campbell, 2000; Sroufe, 1997; Warren and Sroufe, 2004). Families leading risky lives can be explained using the emotional security theory. As an initial step in expanding the viability of the emotional security theory, we first address how the application of emotional security theory may raise new questions and advance an understanding of how and why domestic violence increases child vulnerability to psychopathology.

### **2.15 Gap Knowledge**

Until the time of doing this research there was no literature concerning the effect of interparental conflict to preadolescent behaviour in Tanzania. Much of the focus in the past had been on the gender based violence and marital conflicts (Natihaika, 2000) and the direct effects to the primary victims. This trend obscured the indirect victims, the children, and the impact interparental conflict could make to preadolescent behaviour. As a result very little is known about the effect of interparental conflict to preadolescent behaviour in Tanzania. This study aims at filling that gap.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This part of the research provides the research methodologies related to the study validity and reliability of the collected data, procedures and techniques, which were adopted during the execution of this study.

It also describes the methods and tools that were used in the data collection and it further describes the area of the study as well as its characteristics study population samples and sampling techniques that were used. Finally, this part describes how the gathered data were presented and also provides the techniques and procedures that were adopted for data analysis as well as the limitations that in one way or another affected the study. The study adopted qualitative approach.

#### **3.2 Design of the Study**

Research design can be regarded as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Design means adopting the technique of social science research which is most suited for the research and study of the problem (Rwegoshora, 2006). This study used a case study research design. According to Rwegoshora (2014), in a case study survey, a researcher makes contact with various elements of the problem and the subject. He/she studies the behaviour, actions and other affairs of the subjects. It is in fact a direct contact with the subject.

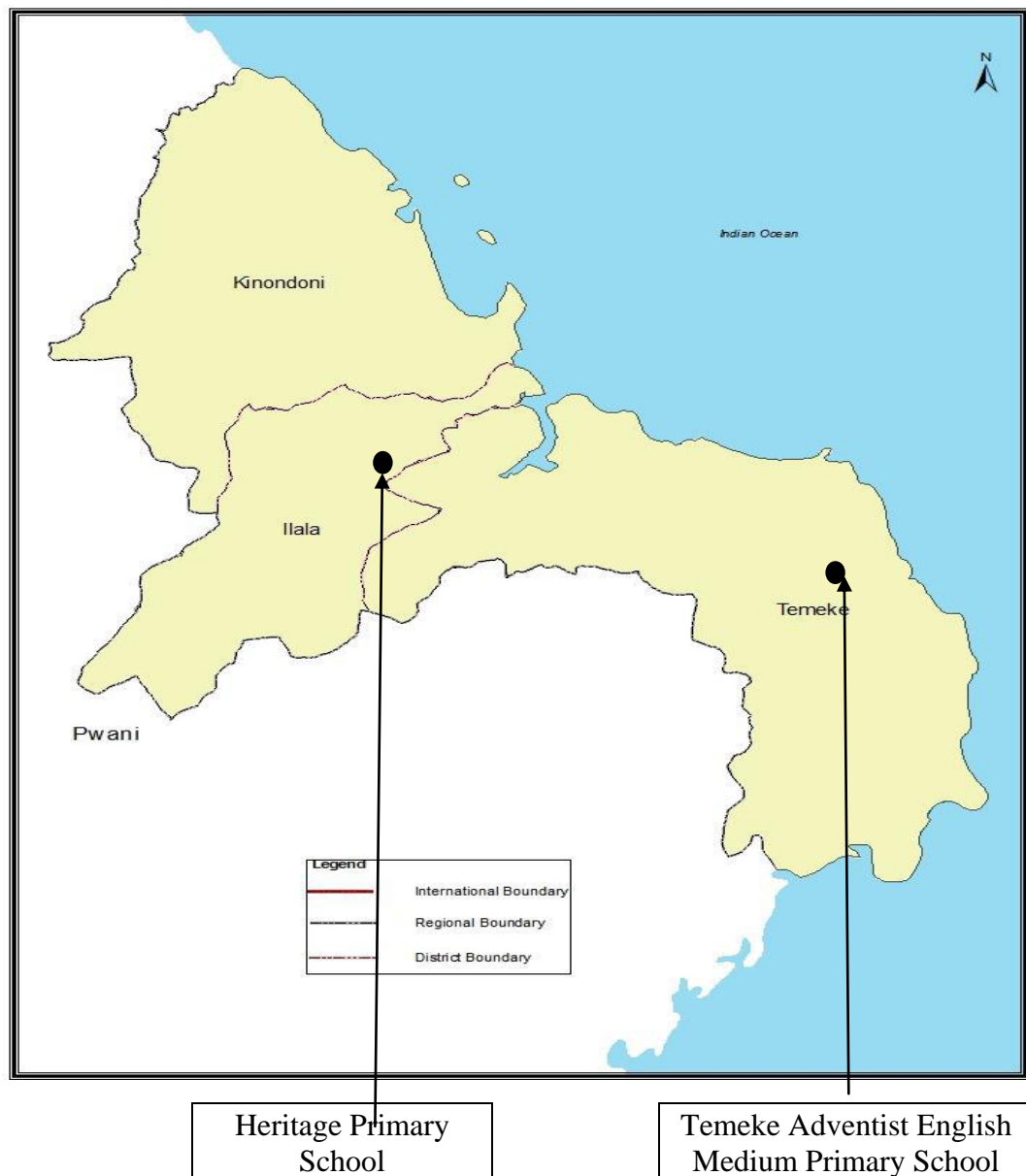
### **3.3 Area of the Study**

This study was conducted in the following primary schools; Temeke Adventist Primary School in Temeke District, this school is about fifty kilometers from Temeke district council via Kigamboni ferry. It is in Kigamboni area, at the place known as Kibada. There are two ways that somebody could get there. Through Kigamboni ferry, Kigamboni NSSF bridge and through the Kilwa road. If you decide to take Kilwa road as you get at Kongowe center then on the left there is a road that goes to Kigamboni then it is through that road someone may go direct to the school, on the way, on your left the sign board of Temeke Adventist Primary school can be seen.

Then there is a road that goes direct to school. From the main road it is about three kilometers. Then, Heritage Primary School in Ilala District. This primary school is about twenty five kilometers from the city center. It is in the area known as Banana. As you go to Gongo la Mboto the school is on the right side. This school is a few meters from the Ukonga Prison. Another school is known as Kongowe Adventist Primary School in Kibaha Pwani. The school is about twenty kilometers from the Kibaha town center. The school is about one kilometer and half from the main road of Dar es Salaam to Chalinze.

The reason for carrying such a study in these Primary schools is because, firstly, these schools are full of children coming from different social background and classes. Secondly these are the only Seventh day Adventist Primary Schools in Dar es Salaam and Pwani Regions. Thirdly, time factor; the fact that this is an academic research with the time limit so it was seen important to conduct my research to this nearby areas. Fourthly, the issue of financial constraints. The fact that these areas are

closer and reachable to the researcher, henceforth there is a minimum spending amount of money to reach them.

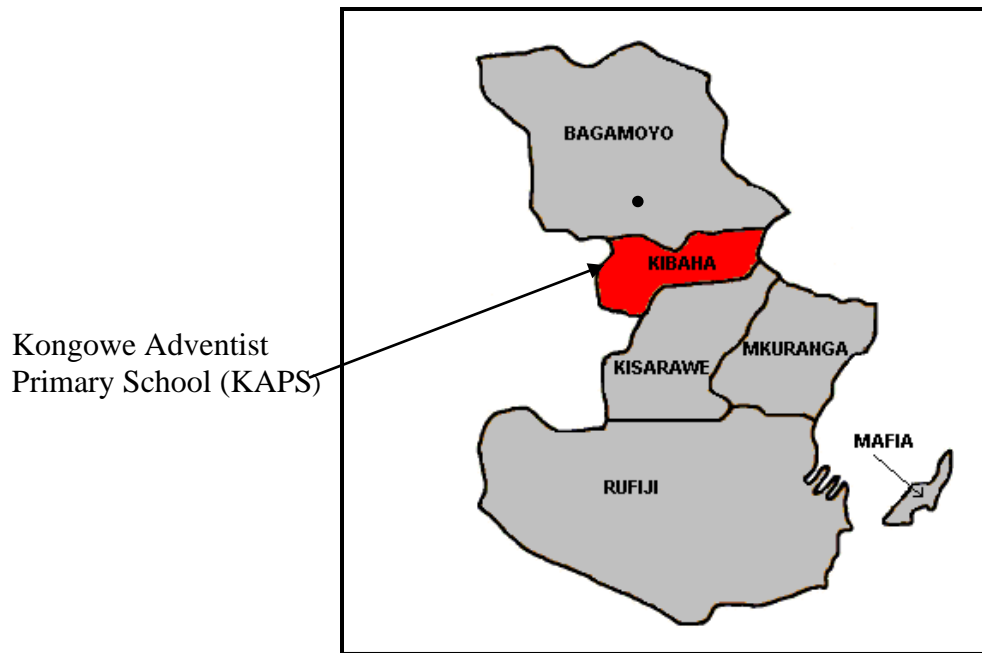


**Figure 3.1: Map of Ilala and Temeke Districts in Dar es Salaam Region**

Source: Field Survey, (2015)

The above map shows the Ilala and Temeke Districts in which Heritage and Temeke Adventist English Medium primary schools are found.





**Figure 3.2: Map of Kibaha District in Coast Region**

Source, Field survey, (2015)

The above map shows the Kibaha District in which Kongowe Adventist Primary School (KAPS) is found.

### 3.4 Study Approach

This study employed qualitative approach. A qualitative approach depends more on the richness of the information gathered. According to Kothari (2009), qualitative research has the ability to assess attitudes, opinions and behaviours of the research in formats in a more realistic way. This approach helps the researcher to understand, record and describe the nature and quality of views of the informants in their own terms instead of just counting number of views given and interpreting them through the researchers view point. Hence, the researcher believes that the qualitative approach best facilitated the collection and analysis of data needed for this study on the effect of interparental conflict on exposed children.

### **3.5 Population of the Study**

Population is a group of individuals, objects, or items from which samples are taken for measurement. Rwegoshora (2006) says, target is the one which includes all the units (person) of which the information is required. Therefore, target population is all respondents on the research problem which the researcher thought they can provide relevance information concerned the topic understudy. My target population included children between 10 -14 years about 90 pupils and 13 teachers.

### **3.6 Sampling**

A sample is a portion of people drawn from a large population which is a representative of the population with some basic characteristics of the population from which it is drawn, so the main concern in sampling is the number of units of particular descriptions, so as to get a practical and more convenient sample and for the researcher to obtain good quality and representative information from few people information that could be used for generalization about the entire population. Mugendi 1999 described sampling as a process of techniques of selecting number of individuals for study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group, from which they were selected. Henceforth sampling is to secure a representative from which will enable the researcher to get information about the case under study. In this research both convenience and purposive sampling were used.

#### **3.6.1 Convenience Sampling Techniques**

The convenience sampling was used in this study. This is a research, that a researcher studies those persons who are most conveniently available or who accidentally come

in his contact during a certain time in the research. Let me start with Kongowe Primary School. I went to the school and met the head teacher I gave him the letter from the University asking the permission to conduct such a research in his school, he was very happy and he assigned the teacher whom we worked together. Because my research is focusing the preadolescent (10-14 years), we took the assumption that from class 4-7 should be the pupils that I met, the preadolescent. The day was arranged, all the pupils that were available at that particular time were called. About 175 pupils met together, we had 92 boys and 83 girls.

Then with the help of the teacher on duty I distributed the papers that had the following information, what is your name, age and class. Then there was this very important question “Have you ever witnessed your parents fighting, beating, abusing, and yelling to each other? They had to answer Yes or No. About 34 pupils said yes and 141 said no. So those 34 pupils were taken as my target population, they were 12 boys and 22 girls. So they had to fill the questioner that I gave them.

Then I went to Temeke Adventist Primary School, I met the Headmaster, I gave him the letter to show am requesting to conduct a research at his particular school, he accepted. He assigned this task to the academic master, who arranged the class and informing the teachers to be ready for the research. Then the class was arranged and I met the pupils from class 4 -6. Class 7 had already finished school. So those pupils that I met were the ones that were found at that particular time about 90 of them. They were 53 boys and 37 girls. The Academic master and I gave them papers, on which they had to write their names, age, and class. Then one question was asked “Have you ever witnessed your parents fighting, beating, abusing, and yelling to each

other? They had to answer Yes or No. Those who said yes were about 34 pupils; those who said no were 56 pupils. So there were 34 pupils; 19 boys and 15 girls are the ones who were involved in my research by answering the questionnaires that I presented to them.

Finally, I went to Heritage primary school. The headmaster introduced me to the chaplain and we arranged the day to gather class 4-6, class 7 were not involved because they had already finished school. There were about 173 pupils (90 boys and 83 girls). So they were given a piece of paper and they had to write their names, class and age. Then they had to answer this simple question “Have you ever witnessed your parents fighting, beating, abusing, and yelling to each other? They had to answer Yes or No. Those who said yes were 22, and those who said no were 151. Then I took 22 pupils; were 9 boys and 13 girls and that was my target population I gave them the questionnaire that I had prepared.

### **3.6.2 Purposive Sampling**

This is also known as judgmental sampling, here the researcher purposely chooses a person who, in his judgment has some appropriate characteristics required of the sample members.

I choose the teachers whom in my judgment had appropriated characteristics and relevant to the research topics. In each school I went I asked the administration that I may meet the class teachers. In my opinion, I thought it was good to meet the class teachers because they were familiar with the habits of pupils, also I asked the administration that I meet with the discipline masters because my study involved

behavior of pupils, I believed that the discipline masters could be good informants of the pupils behavior. Finally I asked the administrations that I should meet with the teachers who were counselors because they were the ones who could provide good information regarding whether such schools changed children's behavior.

### **3.6.3 Sample Sizes and their Characters**

About 90 pupils were involved in the research, this number was obtain after I gave the simple question to about 438 pupils that said "Have you ever witnessed your parents fighting, beating, abusing, and yelling to each other?" They had to answer Yes or No. Therefore the pupils who said yes were about 90. This was a justification for picking such pupils because this could be the indicator and the assumption that their parents had been involved in some conflicts. 13 teachers were taken; 3 were discipline masters, 1 was the counselor, and 9 were class teachers.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

The first method used was questionnaire. According to Blackie (2000), says a questionnaire is a list or set of questions addressed to a group of people who respond and return to the sender in a given period of time. But in the case of the pupils it was difficult for them to be given questionnaires and fill them at home or at school in a given time and return them to the sender. Therefore I had to supervise them and explained what was intended at specific questions. This method was applied to all the schools with exception of Kongowe Adventist Primary School (KAPS), that was a first school of gathering the data. I gave questions and told them to answer. However, I realized some pupils were finding it difficult to answer the questions so I decided to explain them. Therefore during the subsequent visitation for other schools, the

questions were supported by the explanation of what was really intended in a specific question.

The second method used was the interview. This was important as it helped to know the magnitude of the problem and its effect to children. According to Young (1983) interview is relevant because is a systematic method whereby one person enters more or less into the inner life of another who is comparatively strange to him/her. Therefore the researcher interviewed about 13 teachers from these schools, the entire interview was tape recorded with the exception of one female teacher. She was worried that the interview might be used in the future against her, although the researcher assured her of confidentiality, but she insisted on her refusal. Then the researcher had simply to take some notes from the interview.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. The stages that are published by Brick and Green (2007) were used which included reading and annotating transcripts, identifying themes, developing a coding schemes and coding the data. The researcher identified and took note of the main themes which emerged through questionnaires, and listening to the tape recorder, the topics were identified based on the common problems raised by the respondents and the main and the most important points expressed for each question.

### **3.9 Limitation of the Study**

This study had some limitations. Firstly, due to the limited time of the research as this was an academic research designed to meet a study deadline schedule by the

University, and also given to my financial constraints, this study focused at around Dar es Salaam city, at Heritage primary school and TAEMS and Pwani, at Kongowe Adventist Primary school. It is believed that respondents were rich in their ability to provide data needed for the topic of this study. The findings and conclusion in the current study should not necessarily be generalized to all primary schools in Tanzania. However, the rich contextual descriptions that are presented in this study should provide the reader with sufficient information to decide the extent to which the findings could be useful in other relevant situations.

Second, I never met with the parents involved in this research, because these schools are boarding and it could be very difficult to meet them. But I still believe the results found in this research are valid to some extent because I used all the important research methodology.

Third, as a researcher, I never had the direct measuring instrument of determining that certain maladaptive behaviour and emotion was the result of domestic violent (interparental conflict) at home and not other factors. But the findings of this study cannot be totally denied because several studies elsewhere have found that 85-90% of the time, when a violent incident took place in a domestic situation, children were present; and in about 50% of those cases, children were also abused during the violent incident (Queensland Domestic Taskforce, 1998; Cleaver *et al.*, 1999, cited in Fleischer, 2000). And the available studies indicate parents with destructive conflict resolution stance have children who are anti-social, aggressive, uneasy, full of anxiety, depressed, lacking self control and are at risk of internalizing and externalizing disorders (McCoy *et al.*, 2009). Therefore I could presume that most of

the children (the sample size of 90 pupils) who were involved in this research their maladaptive behaviours were the result of domestic violent (interparental conflict).

Finally, I am the outsider and the pastor, no one can deny the possibility that the pupils felt reluctant to disclose all the information from their parents or guardians concerning interparental conflict, in discussing this sensitive topic. However all the efforts were done to create a support for them and assure them of confidentiality of the information they shared with me.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. Presentation of data has been elaborated by using tables and figures. The presentation is in the form of sub themes, which corresponds with the research question and objectives. Kothari (1990) defines data analysis as a “computation of certain measures along with searching the patterns of relationship that exist among the data groups”. It is through data analysis a logical deduction can be done. The research question is passed to prove or to refute the validity in relation to the research analysis.

The total number of the respondents in this study was 103 as a sample size. 90 respondents were given questionnaire and all answered and 13 teachers were interviewed and were tape recorded with exception of 1 female teacher, who feared that her words might be used against her sometimes in the future, though was assured of her confidentiality. So I had to interview her and write some key points only.

The chapter is divided into the following parts. The first part discusses the profile of the respondents. The second part discusses the profile of the behaviour of the pupils before, after the interparental conflict and during their stay at school; the other part discusses factors that made pupils changing possible, views of the teachers and pupils concerning interparental conflict.

## 4.2 Profile of the Respondent

This part is important as it shows who participated. The respondents participated in the research were 90 pupils and 13 teachers, therefore the total number of respondents were 103. Pupils were as follows KAPS 34 pupils (38%) TAEMS 34 pupils (38%), Heritage 22 (24%). There were 40 boys (44%) and 50 (56%) girls. There were 13 teachers (9 male and 4 female); 5 teachers from KAPS, 4 teachers from TAEMS, and 4 teachers from Heritage school.

**Table 4.1: Profile of the Respondents (Pupils) by Age and Gender**

Age	Boys	%	Girls	%
10	3	3%	15	17%
11	9	10%	14	16%
12	15	17%	12	13%
13	10	11%	5	6%
14	3	3%	4	4%

Source: Field Survey, (2015)

Table 4.1 shows that 10 years of age were 18 pupils, boys were 3 (3%) of all the pupils, girls were 15 (17%) of all the pupils. Age 11 were 9 boys (10%) of all the pupils, while girls were 14 (16%) of all the pupils. Age 12 were 15 boys (17%) of all the pupils while girls were 12 (13%) of all the pupils. Age 13 were 10 boys (11%) of all the pupils, while girls were 5 (6%) of all the pupils. Age 14 were 3 boys (3%) of all the pupils, while girls were 4 (4%) of all the pupils. Therefore the age group that highly participated in the research was age 12 because there were 15 boys (17%) of all the pupils while the girls were 12 (13%) of all the pupils. The lowest age that

participated was 14. Boys were 3 (3%) of all the pupils, girls were 4 (4%) of all the pupils. The reason behind age 12 highly participation, is that this age group is found in class five and six respectively. The reason for the lowest participants of age 14 is that they are mostly found in class seven. All class seven in three schools with exception of KAPS had already finished by the time I arrived in those schools.

**Table 4.2: Profile of the Respondents (Teachers), by School and Gender**

SCHOOL	TEACHERS	
	MALE	FEMALE
KAPS	5	-
TAEMS	2	2
HERITAGE	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2015)

Table 4.2 shows the 13 teachers participated in the research for all these three schools, were 9 female and 4 male teachers.

#### **4.2.1 Period of Staying at School**

**Table 4.3: Time Spent at Schools by Pupils**

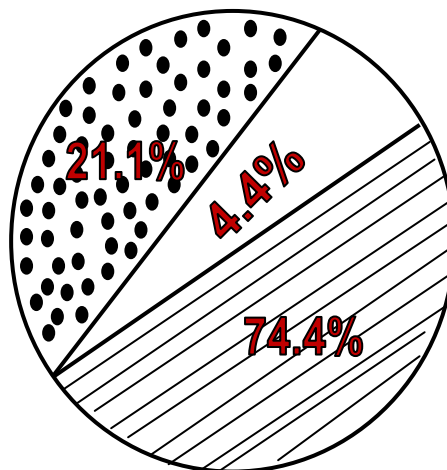
Time spent	Pupils
Less than a year	12
One year	10
More than a year	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>

Source Field Survey, (2015)

This part is presented here as a justification that a time of staying at a particular school can have a great or little effect to the pupil's behaviour and emotion. The pupils who spent less than a year were 12 (13%) of all the pupils, 10 pupils (11%) of all the pupils spent one year. 61 pupils (8%) had spent more than one year. 7 pupils (8%) never answered this question.

#### 4.2 The Degree of Inteparental Conflict at the Families

The pupils measured the degree of their conflict in their homes. This is based on some facts that the conflict which is more frequent, intense and of longer duration tends to be associated with more negative child outcomes. Frequency has been linked to conduct problems, anger and insecurity, and academic difficulties (Cummings and Davies, 1994).



**Figure 4.1: The Degree of Interparental Conflict in Families**

Source: Field Survey October, (2015)

#### KEY



Intense and frequent conflict



Few times conflict

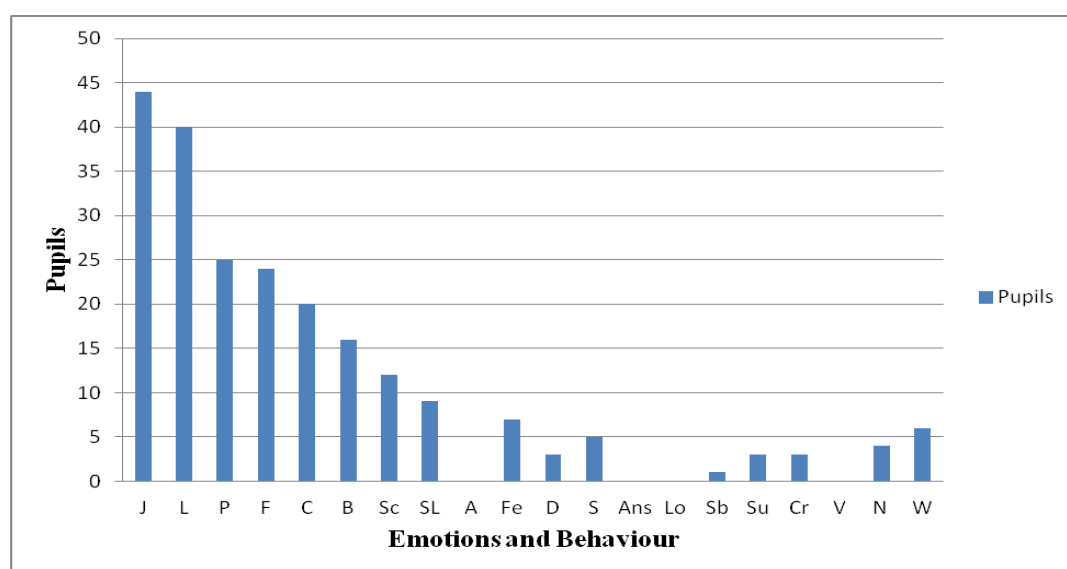


Respondents who never answer

The highest number of respondents were 67 (74.4%) are those who witnessed their parents in conflict few times. Then those who witnessed an intense and frequent conflict were, about 19 (21.1%) and 4 (4.4%) respondents never answered this question.

### 4.3 Identification of Emotion and Behaviour as the Result of Inteprental Conflict

The pupils were requested to assess how their emotion and behaviour were before the rise of conflict, after the conflict and when they joined their respective schools.



**Figure 4.2: Assessment of Pupils Behavior and Emotion BEFORE the inter Parental Conflict**

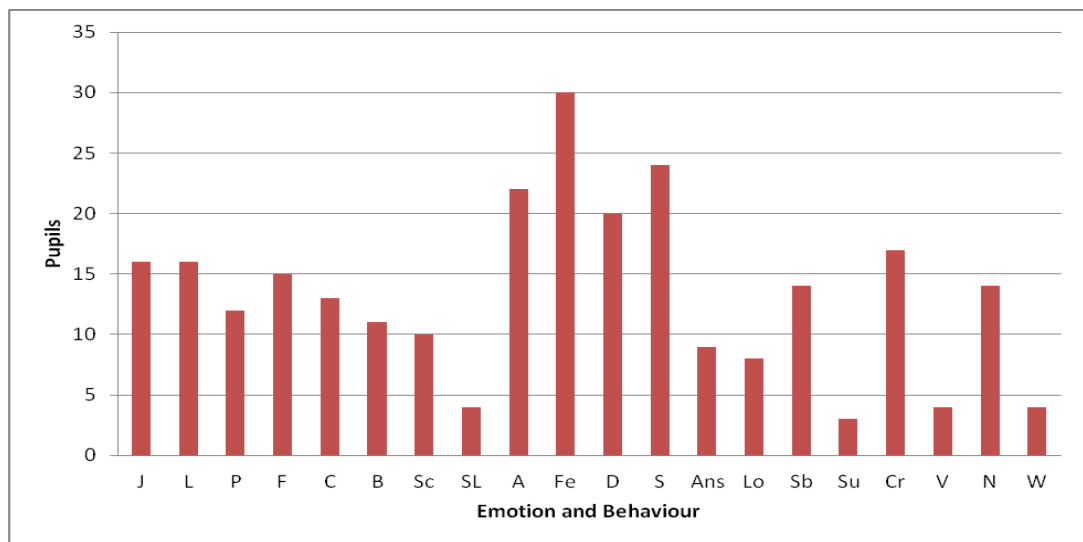
Source Survey Field October, (2015)

#### KEY

J	Joyful	SL	Sleep	Sb	Self blame
F	Friendly	A	Anger	Su	Suicide
B	Boldness	Fe	fear	Cr	Crying
SC	Self- confidence	D	Depression	V	Violent
C	Concentration	S	Stress	N	Nightmare
L	Loving to parents	Ans	Anti-social	W	Wetting bed
P	Politeness	Lo	Loneliness		

It seemed that 44 pupils (49%) before the conflict were full of joy, then 40 pupils (44%) they loved their parents, 25 pupils (28%) they were polite toward others, 24 pupils (27%) they were friendly. About 20 pupils (22%) were concentrative. 16 pupils (18%) were bold, while 12 pupils (13%) were self- confident. 9 pupils (10%) said that they had a good and enough sleep, 7 pupils (8%) were fearful, those who wet the bed were 6 pupils (7%).

#### 4.3.1 Identification of Emotion and Behavior as the Result of Interparental Conflict



**Figure 4.3: Assessment of Pupils Behavior and Emotion after the Rise of Interparental Conflict**

Source: Field survey, October, (2015)

#### KEY

J – Joyful  
F – Friendly  
B – Boldness  
Sc – Self confidence  
C – Concentration  
L – Loving to parents  
P – Politeness  
Sl – Sleep

A – Anger  
Fe – Fear  
D – Depression  
S – Stress  
Ans – Anti- social  
L – Loneliness  
Sb – Self blame  
Su – Suicide

Cr – Crying  
V – Violent  
N – Nightmare  
W – Wetting bed

Those stressful were 5 pupils (6%) of all the pupils. Those who were depressive, suicidal and always crying were about 3 pupils in each three groups about 3%. Those who had nightmare were 4 pupils (4%) of all the pupils. There was 1 pupil (1%) who said that he was always blaming himself. There was no pupil who was angry, antisocial, lonely and violent toward others. Generally it can be concluded that before the conflict arise between parents, pupils were happy, radiant and positive.

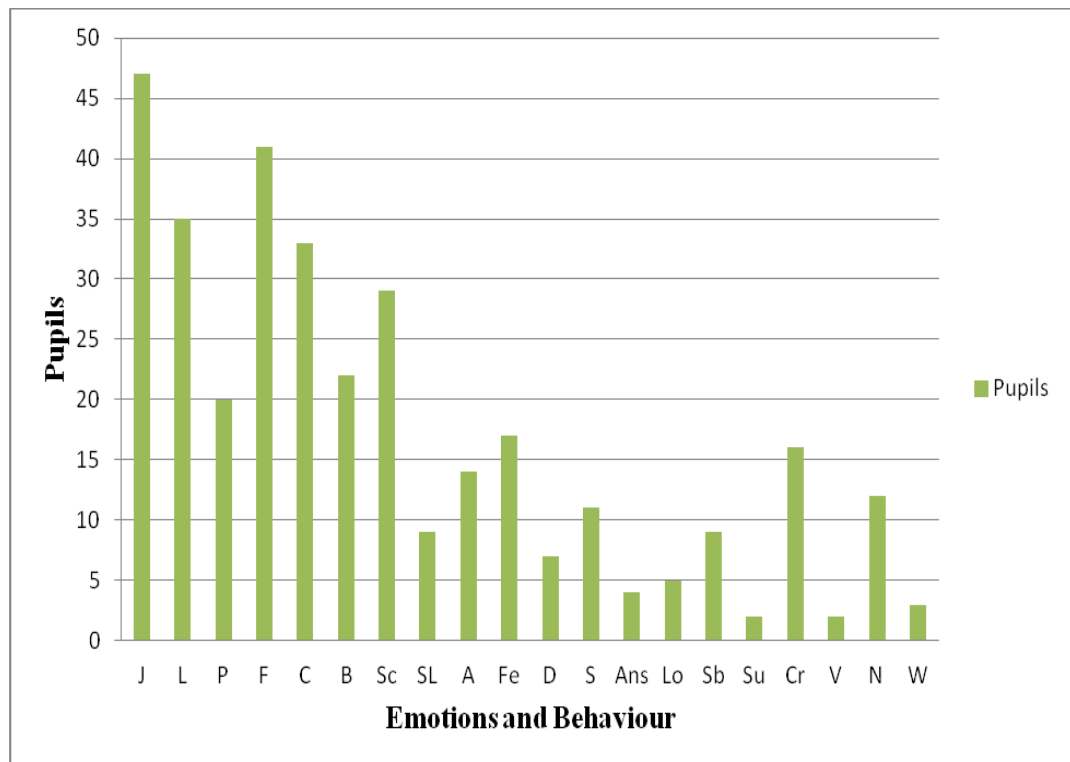
There were about 30 pupils (33%) who said that were fearful, then 24 pupils (27%) were stressful, about 22 pupils (24%) were angry, 20 pupils (22%) were depressive, 17 pupils (19%) said that they were always crying, those who were joyful and loving to parents were 16 pupils (18%) in each group, 15 pupils (17%) said they were friendly.

14 pupils (16%) were both involved in two groups as those who were full of self blame and had nightmare, 13% pupils (14%) were concentrative, 12 pupils (13%) were polite, 11 pupils (12%) were bold, 10 pupils (11%) were self-confident, 9 pupils (10%) were anti social, 8 pupils (9%) were lonely. Those who were violent, wetting the bed, and had enough sleep were 4 in each group about (4%), those who had suicidal thoughts were 3 pupils (3%). The negative behaviour and emotions can be seen high in the figure above while the positive emotion and behaviour can be seen low in the picture.

The amazing fact is being suicidal, violent, and lovely is low in the figure instead of being high, the assumption is the nature of the conflict can be ranked as a few time interparental conflict rather than a so much frequent and intense conflict which can

have a destructive effect on the behaviour and emotions of pupils. Therefore it can be concluded that even the mild interparental conflict can have damage effect in the behaviour and emotion of the pupils.

#### 4.3.2 Behavior and Emotions after Joining the School



**Figure 4.4: Assessment of Pupils Behaviour and Emotion after (during) Joining the School**

Source: Field Survey, (2015)

#### KEY

J –Joyful	L – Loving to parents	D – Depression
F –Friendly	P – Politeness	S – Stress
B –Boldness	Sl – Sleep	Ans – Anti- social
Sc –Self confidence	A – Anger	L – Loneliness
C –Concentration	Fe – Fear	Sb – Self blame
Su – Suicide		
Cr – Crying		



After joining the schools some remarkable changes were seen. 47 pupils (52%) reported that were joyful, 41 pupils (46%) reported that were friendly, 22 pupils (24%) were bold, 29 pupils (32%) were self confident, 33 pupils (37%) were concentrative, 35 pupils (39%) loved their parents, 20 pupils (22%) were polite, 9 pupils (10%) had enough sleep, 14 pupils (16%) were angry, 17 pupils (19%) were fearful, 7 pupils (8%) were depressive, 11 pupils (12%) were stressful, 4 pupils (4%) were antisocial, 5 pupils (6%) were lonely, 9 pupils (10%) had self – blame, 2 pupils (2%) were suicidal, 16 pupils (18%) were always crying, 2 pupils (2%) were violent to others, 12 pupils (13%) had nightmare 3 pupils (3%) were wetting the bed.

So it can be seen from the figure that by attending these Christian School the positive emotions and behaviour were reinstated, like joy, friendly, boldness, self confidence, and the negative emotions like fear, depression, antisocial, violence, suicidal thoughts, and self blame dwindled.

#### 4.4 Verification of the Behaviour Change

There are factors which made change possible to the lives of pupils.

Table 4.4 shows the factors that changed the emotion and behaviour of pupils.

**Table 4.4: Factors that Improved the Emotions and Behavior of Pupils**

Factors	Pupils			
	Yes	%	No	%
Prayer and Bible study	81	90	8	9
Youth Programs at School	73	81	15	17
A sympathizing friend	55	61	32	36
A mentor who supports	40	44	47	52
Optimistic Attitude	65	72	19	21
Being far away from Interparental conflict	35	39	38	42
From pessimistic to optimistic attitude	66	73	21	23

Source; Field Survey (2015)

Table 4.4 shows the following information, those who acknowledged that prayer and Bible studies have helped them are 81 (90%) and those who said no are 8 pupils (9%). Those who acknowledged that youth programmes at school have helped them were 73 pupils (81%) and those who said no were 15 pupils (17%).

Those who acknowledged that a sympathizing friend has contributed to their changing were 55 pupils (61%) and those who said no were 32 pupils (36%), those who said that a mentor had contributed in their changing of behaviour were 40 pupils (44%), those who said no were 47 pupils (52%).

Those who acknowledged that being far away from interparental conflict has contributed to their changing were 35 (39%) while those who said no, were 38 (42%). Those who acknowledged that they have generally changed from their debilitating emotion and behaviour to a strong and vibrant behaviour were 66 (73%) while those who had said no were 21 (23%).

#### **4.4.1 Factors that hindered others**

In a response to the question that asked those whose emotion and behaviour never changed, some pupils came out with the following reasons; one of the reason is that, the ongoing conflict at home instill fear and grief in minds of some pupils thus why their presence of being at school is not affected positively. Thus means some of these pupils are pre-occupied with what is going on at home.

One girl said; All the times I brood over what is happening at home and sometimes I cry and blame myself instead of trusting in God”.

Other gave some reasons that are quite out of the topic under discussion, some pupils mentioned corporal punishment, the habit of some parents to beat pupils when they fail and missing a sympathizing friend can make some pupils being pessimistic (having destructive emotion/behaviour) instead of being vibrant, joyful and optimistic.

#### **4.4.2 Views of the Pupils Concerning Interparental Conflict**

In regards to the interparental conflict pupils had the following views.

##### **4.4.2.1 Happy Family**

Pupils long to see their family and parents stay happy and peaceful, one girl said.

“I feel pain when I see parents fight, I long to see parents being in harmony and love each other, and make our family happy”.

##### **4.4.2.2 The Feeling of Pain**

Pupils feel pain when the parents are in conflicts, one girl said

“Parents you are making us painful, you will kill us with stress, because most of the time we are sad, and this makes us not to concentrate in our studies. I advice parents stop conflict be filled with compassion toward us”.

##### **4.4.2.3 Pupils know whatever their Parents are Doing**

One child said she sees the evils that his father does. When she tells her mother, her mother confronts his father and this compounds the conflict. Therefore these pupils said so “I always keep quite”, then another pupil had this view, “father should stop an affair outside marriage, this creates conflict.”

#### **4.4.2.4 Pleaded Parents to Worship God**

Pupils requested their parents to fear God and pray every day. The researcher thinks pupils thought that if their parents truly worship the Transcendent then they will not be involved in conflict.

#### **4.4.2.5 Attitude toward Violence**

The pupils had the following observation toward their parents conflict. One pupil said, "I always felt my parents to stop fighting because they will make me to be like them, when my mother fights father, I do tell her that when I grow up I will behave like you". Again another child had this view. "They should stop fighting because when they fight, they spoil the minds of the children. Therefore when children grow up they will likewise do the same things".

#### **4.4.2.6 Pupil's Involvement in the Conflict**

It seems that the pupils are found to be involved in the conflicts of parents and one child said, "I told them that they should stop fighting, my mother understood me and she stopped, but my father didn't understand me" One girl said, "They should not involve us into the conflict". Another pupil said "I have advised my mother and she accepted the advice, so now they are living peacefully. The researcher observed that all those who gave their views were girls, they wrote what troubles them, and they articulated their feelings, pain and stress while boys generally wrote, "They should stop the conflict".

### **4.5 Views of the Teachers Concerning the Interparental Conflict**

Teachers had the following opinions concerning the pupils that come from interparental conflict homes.

#### **4.5.1 Awareness of the Pupils from Interparental Conflict**

When teachers were asked if they are aware of the pupils from the interparental conflict they said unless somebody makes a follow up of a pupil background it may be difficult to know them. Some teachers had these views: “Children from interparental conflict are less concentrative; they perform less in their home work given, and very aggressive and stubborn in nature”. On top of that the teachers may be informed by the parents themselves of what is happening at home. All the teachers said it is very helpful to be aware of the pupils from the interparental conflict so as to help them.

#### **4.5.2 Effects of Interparental Conflict to Children Behaviour**

The teachers enumerated some effects of interparental conflict to children

- (i) Pupils make their parents role model, they copy from their parents. Therefore pupils may learn a violent behaviour from the parents.
- (ii) Pupils develops hatred toward life and becomes violent to others
- (iii) Pupils develops inferiority complex.
- (iv) Pupils loose confidence toward life
- (v) Pupils are filled with anger.
- (vi) Pupils are found to be loneliness. When one pupil was asked why was found to be alone most of the time he responded, “I always think of my mother”.

#### **4.5.3 Communication with Parents**

The teachers had the following views concerning their communication with pupils from interparental conflict family.

It may depend on the personality of the parent. If the parent knows that you know the problem he or she may develop a defense mechanism, hence communication breakdown.

One teacher commented

“You need to be careful in communication with the parent so as he may not think you are making an intervention to his problem”.

The problems that happen at home influence some parents to make a school like a dumping place, one teacher said, “these parents bring their children to school then they leave all the duty to the caring of a teacher”.

#### **4.5.4 Support that Children Get who comes from Interparental Conflict Homes**

The teachers had the following views on what they do to help pupils from interparental conflict families.

- (i) When a pupil is found alone and the teacher knows his problem, a pupil is encouraged to socialize with other children, one teacher said “I always say to them focus on your studies at school, leave away home affairs”.
- (ii) Another teacher emphasized about counseling, he said, “I always become closer to those children, we talk other things, and then we make group counseling. This group can act as a support network for a pupil who feels lonely”
- (iii) It was said that the pupils are given hope, so as they should feel that teachers are there to support them.
- (iv) They are encouraged to trust in God who can solve their problems.

- (v) Talking to these pupils, making them friends, and loving them, these pupils can feel peace at school and by so doing they can feel to have found what they have missed, and that is love.

#### **4.5.5 Advice to Teachers**

In response to the question, what advice do you have for other teachers who are working with children from interparental conflict homes. The following was the response

- (i) Love towards the pupils should be an ongoing process
- (ii) Identification of these pupils is very crucial, hence forth being closer to them.
- (iii) Teachers should support these pupils rather than avoiding their problems.
- (iv) These pupils should be cared and valued by the teachers.
- (v) The teacher should be listening always to their pupils.

#### **4.5.6 Teachers' Advice to Parents**

The teachers had the following views and opinions on parents

- (i) Parents should love each other
- (ii) Children look at their parents as role model; their conflict should not be source of problems to their children.
- (iii) Parents should stop conflict because it affects their children performance at school.
- (iv) Parents should solve their problems constructively and not involve children in their conflict

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The chapter comprises of summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study. The study analyzed the effect of interparental conflict to preadolescent behaviour. The aim of this concluding chapter is to critically reflect in some prominent features that have emerged in this study. The answers to the specific research questions are useful as they contribute to understanding Interparental conflict to preadolescent behaviour

#### **5.2 Summary**

In this study, it has been reported that frequency and intense interparental conflict brings destructive impact on the preadolescent emotion and behaviour, the pupils have been observed to be full of fear, stressful, angry and depressed. It has been observed that the children long to have happy family, one pupil dared to say “I long to see my parents stay forever though they do not love each other”. It was observed that children feel pain when parents are in conflict and it seemed that some children were involved in the conflict. It has been observed that when parents involve themselves in conflict the children adapt themselves to violence attitude.

It was discovered that when the pupils join the Christian school there is dramatic change in their behaviour. The emotional and behaviour were positive: joyful, friendly, boldness, self confidence, concentrative, loving to parents, and were polite. Sixty six pupils (73%) said that by joining the Christian school their negative



emotion and behaviour that was caused by interparental conflict changed, while 21 pupils (23%) said their behaviour never changed.

On top of that there were factors that influenced the changing of these pupils such as prayer and Bible studies, Christian youth programmes, a sympathizing friend, a mentor/school counselor, optimistic attitude and being far away from interparental conflict zone.

It was observed by the teachers it is not easy to recognize children from interparental conflict because they may have the same destructive emotion and behaviour like those who have other problems rather than problem. Therefore the teachers should have the opportunity of knowing the background of pupils by talking to them and listening rather than vigorous reacting to any aggressive behaviour.

It has been observed that the pupils need love, hope and encouragement so as to view life in a positive way. The counseling sessions for these pupils from interparental conflict is very essential as to help them adapt with an optimistic attitude.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Therefore it is the responsibility of the parents to live a life that adapt itself towards constructive problem solving life that will not affect children, henceforth excluding children from the negative effect of parental conflict. Mwananchi (2015: 18) has a captivating heading, “a quality parental Relation essential for children nurturing”. The article says,

“Children learn from their parents lives, if children are nurtured from the interparental family they will inherit such a legacy. If children are nurtured

from a family that has a quality relation, good communication that enhance mutual respect, children will likewise value such a relation ..... A good, peaceful family is a product of a well founded relation between parents. Such a family creates a suitable environment for nurturing children”.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

- (i) Faith based institution like church should prepare seminars to married couples on how to solve their problems as they arise in their families so as to buffer the children from interparental conflict.
- (ii) The ministry of education should emphasize the importance of public as well as private schools to have specialized counselors so as to support victims of interparental conflict.
- (iii) Regarding all matters concerning family problem should be quickly, fairly and judicially solved and treated through government institution that deal with family and children so as to buffer children from the impact of interparental conflict.
- (iv) The Seventh day Adventist church should continue to promote its policy that each local church should have a primary school as to provide a wholistic education that is based on spiritual, physical, social and mental stance.

### **5.4 Agenda for Future Research**

This study was about the effects of interparental conflict to preadolescent behaviour, further research needs of find out the impact of constructive conflict to preadolescent behaviour and emotion.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaires

My name is Mbuti Kusekwa I am currently a student of Masters of social work in The Open University of Tanzania (OUT). This questionnaire deals with the topic that says the “Effect of Interparental conflict to Preadolescent behavior”. The results of this research will help to save the preadolescents from being affected. According to this questionnaire interparental conflict means kicking, slapping, beating, insulting, yelling and verbalizing defamatory words to each other.

Therefore please your voluntary cooperation in filling these questionnaires is needed; the assurance is given that all the information given will be treated with great confidentiality

#### 1. Fill in the blanks

- a) Your name.....
- b) Sex .....
- c) Tribe .....
- d) Religion .....
- e) Class .....
- f) Age .....

#### 2. Mark✓ where is relevant to you

- a) My parents, beat, fight, insulting, giving out defamatory words, yelling to each other
  - a. Few times
  - b. Intense and frequently

b) Mark  $\checkmark$  to show the behavior or emotions that you had **BEFORE** conflict started between your parents.

- (i) I was joyful
- (ii) I was friendly
- (iii) I was self confident
- (iv) Boldness
- (v) I had a great capacity of concentration towards my school lessons
- (vi) I was loving to my parents
- (vii) I was polite
- (viii) My sleep was good
- (ix) I was angry
- (x) I was fearful
- (xi) I was depressive
- (xii) I was stressful
- (xiii) I was anti social
- (xiv) I was feeling lonely
- (xv) I was full of self blame
- (xvi) I was full of suicide thoughts
- (xvii) I was frequently crying
- (xviii) I was violent to others
- (xix) I was wetting the bed
- (xx) I had nightmare

c) Mark  $\checkmark$  to show the behavior or emotions you had **AFTER** your parents started the conflict

- (i) I was joyful
- (ii) I was friendly
- (iii) I was self confident
- (iv) Boldness
- (v) I had a great capacity of concentration towards my school lessons

- (vi) I was loving to my parents
- (vii) I was polite
- (viii) My sleep was good
- (ix) I was angry
- (x) I was fearful
- (xi) I was depressive
- (xii) I was stressful
- (xiii) I was anti social
- (xiv) I was feeling lonely
- (xv) I was full of self blame
- (xvi) I was full of suicide thoughts
- (xvii) I was frequently crying
- (xviii) I was violent to others
- (xix) I was wetting the bed
- (xx) I had nightmare

3. Mark  $\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$  to the most relevant sentence.

a) Since the joining of this school, I have

- (i) Less than a year
- (ii) One year
- (iii) One year and above

b) Mark  $\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$  to the most relevant sentence to you;

Since the joining of this school my behavior and emotions have completely changed

- (i) I am joyful
- (ii) I am friendly
- (iii) I am self confident
- (iv) Boldness
- (v) I have a great capacity of concentration towards my school lessons
- (vi) I am loving to my parents
- (vii) I am polite

- (viii) My sleep is good
- (ix) I am angry
- (x) I am fearful
- (xi) I am depressive
- (xii) I am stressful
- (xiii) I am anti social
- (xiv) I am feeling lonely
- (xv) I am full of self blame
- (xvi) I am full of suicide thoughts
- (xvii) I am frequently crying
- (xviii) I am violent to others
- (xix) I am wetting the bed
- (xx) I have nightmare

4. Write True or False in the following sentences

A. Things that made my behavior to change after joining this school is as follows

- (i) The programme of prayers, singing of Christian songs and reading the Bible that school has.....
- (ii) Involvement in Youth programme like Pathfinders.....
- (iii) Having a friend who always encourages me to be positive regardless of challenges that am facing in my family.....
- (iv) An adult or teacher who knows my family problem whom I confide and she or he gives me good advice on how to deal with the problem.....
- (v) My behavior of being positive, joyful and self-confident.....
- (vi) Being far away from home where there is always interparental conflict.....

- (vii) Generally my behavior has changed from being a child who is always sad, anxious, anger and being somebody who is positive, joyful and peaceful.....
- (viii) If you have written false according to the above sentence 4 (vii), why has not your behavior changed  
Give short explanation .....  
.....  
.....
- (ix) What can you tell parents who have conflict in their houses  
.....  
.....  
.....



## Appendix 2: Dodoso kwa Vijana

Mimi naitwa Mbuti Kusekwa ni mwanafunzi katika chuo kikuu huria cha Tanzania (OUT). Dodoso hili lina maswali kuhusiana namna ambavyo **“Mgogoro baina ya wazazi unavyoweza kuwaathiri vijana wadogokitabia na kihisia katika familia”**. Utafiti huu utasaidia jamii namna ya kunusuru watoto wasiathirikenā migogoro hii.

Neno, **Mgogoro** katika dodoso hili inamaanisha hali ya wazazi kugombana, kupigana, kutukanana, kutoleana lugha chafu, kuitana majina mabaya, kupigiana kelele au ukimya wenye hasira. Hivyo basi naomba ushirikiano wako wa hiari katika kujaza dodoso hili. Napenda kukuhakikishia kwamba taarifa utakazojaza ndani ya dodoso hili zitatumika kwa usiri mkubwa.

### 1. Jaza nafasi zifuatazo

- (a) Jina \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Jinsia \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Kabila \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Imani (dini) \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) Darasa \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) Umri \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Wazazi wangu hupigana, hugombana, hutukanana, hutoleana lugha chafu, huitana majina mabaya, hupigiana kelelena kuwa na ukimya wenye hasira. Hivyo weka alama ya $\sqrt{\quad}$ katika sentensi moja kati ya hizi hapa chini inayokufaa sana wewe.

- (i) Mara chache
- (ii) Mara kwa mara na mgogoro huo huwa mkubwa sana

### (a) Weka $\sqrt{\quad}$ kuonesha tabia na hisia ulizokuwa nazo **KABLA** ya **mgogoro** baina ya wazazi wako kuanza.

- (i) Mwenye furaha
- (ii) Mwenye marafiki
- (iii) Mwenye ujasiri
- (iv) Mwenye kujiamini

- (v) Mwenye kuelewa (uzingativu katika) masomo
- (vi) Mwenye kuwapenda wazazi
- (vii) Mwenye upole
- (viii) Mwenye kulala usingizi wa kutosha
- (ix) Mwenye hasira
- (x) Mwenye hofu
- (xi) Mwenye unyong'onyevu
- (xii) Mwenye msongo wa mawazo (mawazo mengi)
- (xiii) Mwenye kukosa marafiki
- (xiv) Mwenye tabia ya kupenda kukaa peke yake
- (xv) Mwenye kujichukia na kujilaumu
- (xvi) Mwenye mawazo ya kutaka kujiua
- (xvii) Mwenye hali ya kupenda kulia
- (xviii) Mwenye ukatili kwa wengine
- (xix) Mwenye ndoto za kutisha usiku
- (xx) Mwenye kukojoa kitandani

(b) Weka ✓ kuonesha tabia au hisia ulizokuwa nazo **BAADA** ya wazazi wako kuanza kuwa na tabia ya **mgogoro (kupigana)**.

- (i) Mwenye furaha
- (ii) Mwenye marafiki
- (iii) Mwenye ujasiri
- (iv) Mwenye kujiamini
- (v) Mwenye kuelewa (uzingativu katika) masomo
- (vi) Mwenye kuwapenda wazazi
- (vii) Mwenye upole
- (viii) Mwenye kulala usingizi wa kutosha
- (ix) Mwenye hasira
- (x) Mwenye hofu
- (xi) Mwenye unyong'onyevu
- (xii) Mwenye msongo wa mawazo (mawazo mengi)
- (xiii) Mwenye kukosa marafiki

- (xiv) Mwenye tabia ya kupenda kukaa peke yake
- (xv) Mwenye kujichukia na kujilaumu
- (xvi) Mwenye mawazo ya kutaka kujiua
- (xvii) Mwenye hali ya kupenda kulia
- (xviii) Mwenye ukatili kwa wengine
- (xix) Mwenye ndoto za kutisha usiku
- (xx) Mwenye kukojoa kitandani

3. Weka alama ✓ katika sentensi moja kati ya hizi zifuatazo.

(a) Tangu kuingia katika shule hiili kusoma nina

- (i) Pungufu ya mwaka mmoja
- (ii) Mwaka 1
- (iii) Zaidi ya mwaka 1

(b) Weka alama ✓ katika sentensi zifuatazo hapo chini. Tangu kuingia katika shule hii tabia na hisia zangu zimebadilika na kuwa

- (i) Mwenye furaha
- (ii) Mwenye marafiki
- (iii) Mwenye ujasiri
- (iv) Mwenye kujiamini
- (v) Mwenye kuelewa (uzingatifu katika) masomo
- (vi) Mwenye kuwapenda wazazi
- (vii) Mwenye upole
- (viii) Mwenye kulala usingizi wa kutosha
- (ix) Mwenye hasira
- (x) Mwenye hofu
- (xi) Mwenye unyong'onyevu
- (xii) Mwenye msongo wa mawazo (mawazo mwengi)
- (xiii) Mwenye kukosa marafiki
- (xiv) Mwenye tabia ya kupenda kukaa peke yake
- (xv) Mwenye kujichukia na kujilaumu
- (xvi) Mwenye mawazo ya kutaka kujiua
- (xvii) Mwenye hali ya kupenda kulia

- (xviii) Mwenye ukatili kwa wengine
- (xix) Mwenye ndoto za kutisha usiku
- (xx) Mwenye kukojoa kitandani

4. Andika **Ndiyo/Hapana** katika sentensi zifuatazo:-

- (a) Mambo yaliyonifanya **nibadilike** baada ya kuingia katika shule hii ni kama ifuatavyo:-
- (i) Hali ya Maombi, nyimbo na kusoma Biblia iliyopo shuleni.....
  - (ii) Hali ya kujihusisha na program mbalimbali za vijana;mfano Chama cha Watafuta Njia.....
  - (iii) Kuwa na rafiki anayenitia moyo nisikate tamaa licha ya matatizo yaliyopo katika familia yangu.....
  - (iv) Mtu mzima au Mwalimu ajuae shida yangu ninayemweleza tatizo langu yeye hunipatia ushauri.....
  - (v) Tabia yangu ya uimara, kujiamini na furaha.....
  - (vi) Kuwa mbali na nyumbani mahali ambapo wazazi hugombana.....
  - (vii) Kwa ujumla tabia yangu imebadilika toka ile ya kuwa katika hali ya huzuni, hofu na hasira na kuwa mwenye tabia ya uchangamfu, furaha na amani.....
  - (viii) Kama umeandika **hapana** kulingana na sentensi hapo juu namba4(vii) ni kwa nini tabia yako haijabadilika kuwa nzuri.

Maelezo

mafupi.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

- (ix) Ni nini unachoweza kuwaambia wazazi kuhusu **migogoro** yao ya nyumbani?  
 .....

### **Appendix 3: The Indepth Interview To The Teacher**

My name is Mbuti Kusekwa am a currently a student of Masters of Social work in Open University of Tanzania (OUT). This interview deals with a topic that says “The Effect of Interparental conflict to preadolescent behavior” The results of this research will help to save the children from being affected by interparental conflict. According to this Interview interparental conflict means kicking, slapping, beating, insulting and verbalizing defamatory words to each other. Therefore please I need your cooperation in this interview.

1. Are you usually aware when children in your class come from interparental conflict homes?  
(How do you gain this information? Would it help you to know which pupil's are from interparental conflict homes?)
2. In your experience as a Teacher has interparental conflict affects children behavior?
3. In your experience as a teacher has interparental conflict affected your communication with parents? If so please explain.
4. What strategies have you used to help children from interparental conflict in your class?
5. What advice do you have for other teachers who are working with children from interparental conflict homes?
6. What is your advice to parents with school children who are in a conflict?
7. Do you really witness that when children from interparental conflict homes come to this school their behavior change?

#### **Appendix 4: Usaili wa Kina Kwa waalimu**

Mimi naitwa Mbuti Kusekwa ni mwanafunzi wa chuo kikuu Huria Tanzania (OUT). Ninahitaji kufanya usaili na wewe Mwalimu kuhusiana na “Namna mgogoro baina ya wazazi unavyoweza kuleta athari kwa tabia ya watoto wadogo (9 – 14)” Utafiti huu utasaidia jamii namna ya kunusuru watoto wasiathirike na migogoro hii.

Mgogoro katika usaili wa kina waweza kumaanisha hali ya wazazi kugombana, kupigana, kutukanana, kutoleana lugha chafu au ukimya wenye hasira. Hivyo basi naomba ushirikiano wako wa hiari katika usaili huu. Napenda kukuhakikishia kwamba taarifa utakazonipa zitatumika kwa usiri mkubwa.

1. Je wakati wote una utambuzi wawatoto wanaotoka katika familia zenye migogoro? (unapataje taarifa?) Je inasaidia kufahamu watoto wanaotoka katika nyumba zenye mgogoro?
2. Katika uzoefu wako ukiwa Mwalimu, Je migogoro baina ya wazazi huathiri vipi tabia za watoto?
3. Katika uzoefu wako kama Mwalimu, Je migogoro baina ya wazazi imeathiri vipi mawasiliano baina yako na wazazi? Kama ndiyo, tafadhali eleza.
4. Ni mbinu zipi unazotumia kusaidia tabia za watoto watokao katika wazazi walio na migogoro?
5. Una ushauri gani kwa walimu wengine wanaofanya kazi na watoto watokao katika nyumba zilizo na migogoro baina ya wazazi?
6. Ushauri wako ni upi kwa wazazi walio katika mgogoro ambao wana watoto wanaosoma shule?
7. Je unaweza kutoa ushuhuda kwamba watoto wanaotoka familia zenye wazazi walio na mgogoro tabia zao hubadilika wanaposoma katika shule hii?

